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EDITORIAL

Launching from Vancouver for a special September edition, NMP invites the amazing Sophie Le-Phat Ho to guest curate and co-edit issue no.17, under the chosen theme of magie.

Thank you to everyone who helped copy edit and assemble this issue and – comme toujours – big love to contributors, curators, and editors extraordinaire. Special thank you to Lukas Blakk and Jeff Traynor for rescuing the website ...as Drupal starts to decay. If anyone out there has time and Drupal skills to donate, email us. We're always looking to enlarge our tech team. If you want to donate money for us to update our site, please do so by linking to our paypal account. No amount is too small, really.

Thank you to Elise Chenier and everyone at *We Demand* in Vancouver for your invaluable feedback and ideas.

And thank you Sophie, you've been a dream to work with.

Dear readers, we are still and always committed to bringing forward a magical and enchanted journal bimonthly.

Mél Hogan

.....

Some notes from a privileged reader...

As NMP's Guest Curator of issue 17, that is simply what I am... someone who gets to pick other people's brains on specific issues, bring together their offerings, and attach her reading of what they produce collectively along with its scattering.

Je n'en suis que très reconnaissante.

The choice of 'magic' as a topic came out of a concern – une préoccupation qui semble être partagée, vu la richesse des contributions présentées dans ce numéro – for what we are up against... En effet, la magie relève de la technique, de la pratique, du procédé, de l'art, de l'action. Elle est donc intimement liée à une analyse de la réalité, de l'environnement, et ne serait être de l'ordre du divertissement, de la fantasmagorie... Bref, this is serious.

But the issue here is not whether magic is real or fake, good or bad. (If you want to know more about magic, check this out for instance, you will find many interesting references there). No definition of magic is being offered here, for its messiness might be what makes magic, in fact, magical. Rather, it is about it being creative.

The cool thing with magic is that the very word (its reading, its hearing, its uttering) is already magical. A tautology that is inherently performative and open-ended. And thus, productive. Attempts to "re-enchant the world" are manifold with most being somewhat apolitical... In contrast (or rather

in resonance), how can infusing magic in our understandings of the world become a political act?

In short, magic is "good to think with." And especially, to think with together. Comment penser avec la magie pourrait nous aider à réexaminer nos pratiques, reconsidérer nos positions, rafraîchir nos idées, bref, à créer?

En partant du concept de magie, on peut se balader... à l'intérieur d'un spectre tendu entre la puissance de la singularité et la quotidienneté ou, comme dirait la sorcière Dori Midnight dans une entrevue sur les « mauvaises herbes » menée par Gina Badger, l'anti-exceptionnalisme, qui devrait être au centre d'une approche critique (féministe, anti-orientaliste, anti-exotisante, anti-capitaliste, etc.) de la magie. Une magie « ordinaire »... C'est également de cette manière que Zahra Moloo comprend la chose à travers sa peinture de l'île de Gorée (Sénégal) – comme une pratique d'un certain voyage dans le temps (de la création de/du/d'un temps) – time travel, anyone? – dont on peut reconnaître l'écho dans plusieurs textes que vous trouverez dans ce numéro.

Magic "outside of the spectacle" is also what Ronald Rose-Antoinette attempts to think through during a conversation with me around i/mages, perception, vision, and the creation of worlds out of chaos. Dans son texte qui accompagne une lettre adressée à Hakim Bey, tobias c. van Veen réfléchit également à « l'infrastructure symbolique » du capitalisme et se demande comment nous pourrions forger des techniques de perception

QUEER ART TAROT
RYTHME URBAN TRANS EROTIC MAGIC SURREAL HAKIM THINGS CULTURE RITUAL
OCCULT SENEGAL GUATTARI REALITY HERBAL SET WITCHCRAFT RESEARCH SEX TECH
NEW UNVEILING TRICKSTER MALWARE TECTUM ÉVÈNEMENT COLONIALISM STRANGERS
PRÉSENCE APPAREIL PROSTITUTION ETHNOBOTANY POP MATERIALISM STRAIGHT
CYBERNETICS IMAGINARY MACHINISME DAEMONS KUTI ENCHANTMENT MYTHOLOGY DE
SUPPORT TECHNICS NAKED CONTRE-NATURE EVERYDAY TRANSFORMATION SUBJECTIVATION SLOTERDIJK
BLIND AFFINITÉS EXTRAORDINARY DÉSENVŌÛTEMENT MANDELBROT CAPITALISM
MAGICK BEAUDRILLARD CONSENSUAL HISTORIES ARCHITECTURE ENCOUNTERS FUTURE SYMBOLS
MAPS MILIEU STRATEGY EXTENSION SIGNIFIERS MALICIOUS PSYCHE LAND L'ACTE DELEUZE GODS
TALK ARTS FELAS L'AVENIR TURNED SORCELLERIE INCANTATIONS ECONOMY MEDICINE METHODS PIERCING HAUNTED ADVERTISING
DERRIDA ORDINARY HEALING THEATRUM CHAOS FUTURE SYMBOLS AGE
L'AVENIR MYTH SPIRITS HAUNTED WALKING PLANT PRAYER JUSTICE SPIRITS THEATRUM CHAOS FUTURE SYMBOLS AGE
THEORIE POLITICS GHOSTS WEEDS STRANGE MAGIE

propre à la magie « avec un k » (comme dans « magick » en anglais, que l'on distingue de la magie des faiseurs d'illusions, des truqueurs). C'est une préoccupation semblable qui anime Adeola Enigbokan lorsqu'elle parle de « vision périphérique » dans son texte sur le tarot, en tant que « pratique urbaine », et sur les manières de (se) dé-programmer, and to learn to tap into the various forces at work around us in order to make us stronger. En effet, comment voir et/ou lire les signes? C'est une exigence qui n'a rien d'évident, comme l'évoque un récit de Tim Maly à propos d'une maison hantée... par un logiciel, récit entrecoupé d'une histoire mythique concernant l'avènement de "The Internet of Things."

Cette volonté de créer des techniques afin de se défaire d'une certaine « organicité perceptive » (telle que la nomme Ronald) – que je lis comme étant une manière de créer de la puissance – traverse plusieurs des thèmes abordés par la série de magnifiques auteur.es qui ont collaboré à la composition de ce numéro. In terms of theory, Erik Bordeleau carefully maps out an impressive range of contemporary thought on action and acting in the world. De leur côté, Anja Kanngieser et Leila ont réalisé une entrevue avec un praticien basé à Londres, aladin (magicien, artiste, consultant, entre autres choses), qui s'apparente peut-être à ce "mediator-operator" which Erik talks about in his text. Pour sa part, Lolix relate sa propre

expérimentation de type « magie sympathique » à travers sa pratique de sex magic – une version de la magie qui bouscule, en outre notre notion du temps, celle de l'espace. Lolix investit les espaces vides ou négatifs... while Erik brings up the notion of the "middle" and of the capacity of shooting straight, so to speak, of being attuned.

Indeed, according to the contributors of NMP 17, it is this capability to make certain kinds of tactical connections that makes magic occur. Cette capacité de (se) transformer...

Je remercie chaudement M-C MacPhee et Mél Hogan de m'avoir invitée, il y aura bientôt presque un an, à jouer la rédactrice en chef pour ce numéro et de m'avoir offert ce plaisir à collaborer avec elles. Props to the whole NMP team for nurturing such a cool project (support them!). And I could not thank enough all the contributors who accepted my invitation, and all the collaborators who accepted their invitations. La générosité, c'est magique...

I hope this issue of NMP is helpful.

Sophie Le-Phat Ho

p.s. j'espère aussi que vous apprécierez le word cloud, composé à partir des mots-clés choisis par les auteur.es de ce numéro!



FOOLISH JOURNEYS: URBAN RESEARCH FOR THE CITY YET TO COME

Olatokunbo Adeola Enigbokan

Keywords: Tarot. Urban. Research. Methods. Maps. Walking. City. l'avenir. The Other. The future. Strangers. Strange encounters.

Foolish Journeys is an urban research project, which begins from Jacques Derrida's distinction between the future and l'avenir: "the future is... predictable, programmed, scheduled, foreseeable; but there is a future, l'avenir (to come) which refers to someone who comes whose arrival is totally unexpected...totally unpredictable. The Other..."

The tarot is also called "The Fool's Journey," in which a seeker sets out to meet the Other and reach The World. The Fool is an ignorant wanderer. He is often depicted as a young man of few possessions, which are tied in a handkerchief at the end of a stick balanced jauntily on his shoulder, as he walks off the edge of a cliff.

The tarot is a guide to encountering l'avenir. If l'avenir is the meeting with the Other, the unknown, the unpredictable, then we might lock eyes with this unforeseeable future, this Other, every day in chance encounters with strangers on the city's streets. Foolish Journeys asks: How can we research the unpredictable in urban life? How can we prepare to meet the city yet to come?

-
- Coupez, mademoiselle. Choisissez neuf cartes de la main gauche.
 - Je sais: trois pour le passé, trois pour le présent, trois pour l'avenir.
 - Connaissez le tarot?
 - Un peu, comme ça[1].



TROIS POUR LE PASSÉ

XX. Judgement: Lagos

We are inside a small Baptist church at dusk, on the outskirts of a Lagos neighborhood in the mid 1980s. I am here for a rare event--the screening of a film depicting the second coming of Christ. This Baptist church is not my church. In my family, going to church is a special event—piling into the station wagon wearing special shoes and hats, sitting still for what seem like hours—reserved for a few Sundays a year. There are certainly never any *films* shown at our church. I come to this new lively church on a regular weeknight at the invitation of my friend, a neighbor. I am allowed to go because it is just a short walk from home. The Baptist church is part of the grounds of the neighborhood secondary school. It is the same school where my father taught Mathematics and coached football for a few years. The walk is familiar. We pass my cousin's apartment building, the general grocery store, cut through the quiet marketplace with its

stalls shuttered for the evening. I have never been to a public film screening before, never sat in the dark with strangers, silently sharing emotions. The large doors close on a crowded room, blocking out the evening breeze. A short speech by the pastor and the lights go out. In this dark place, we are rapt, focused on the portable hanging screen set up in front of the pulpit. What we see is a moving picture of the end of the world: radio broadcasts frantically announcing the mysterious disappearance of millions; irons left on, burning hot; eerily empty streets; abandoned cars; desolate shops; and a few very blond, very afraid stragglers screaming, running, left behind in the big American city. We emerge bewildered. Outside it is already night.

O. The Fool: Manhattan

It is August, 1995 and I arrive from Seattle with two suitcases and \$1500. My path to the city follows a shaky finger running west to east, reversing Manifest Destiny, along a map of the United States taped to the wall of the high school counselor's office. The finger stops on a small island off the coast of the United States. There is a tiny black shadow of a plane, nose north, the letters "JFK" hovering just above my fingertip. "I want to go here," I say to the counselor. The first few days I wander underground. Exiting at Christopher Street, thick night air envelops me. I cross 7th Avenue and into the labyrinthine streets of this old city where it is impossible to walk in a straight line for long. Passing a narrow town house, I am drawn in by the sound of revelers, friendly voices laced with laughter. Someone calls to me and waves, and soon I am navigating a crowded kitchen holding a glass

of wine, sipping slowly, listening to conversation. Outside, I am back on 7th Avenue, spit out into Sheridan Square. I follow a group of young men wearing colorful bandanas, singlets and jeans into the Monster. Around the piano, middle-aged white men sing smoky songs from musicals. I continue down a side staircase, trailing the young men, into almost complete darkness, broken by rhythmic strobes. I feel the sound before I hear it, rich bass traveling up from my feet, exploding just below my navel. Around me there is a mesh of brown bodies, shining with sweat. It is impossible to stand still now, and so I dance.



The Knight of Cups: Brooklyn

On a freezing night, Vida calls. Her voice is difficult to hear, almost drowned by bumping music and shouts. In the silence of my apartment, this sound is deafening. *Come out tonight!* I resist and she threatens to keep calling. Reluctantly, I write down the address. I put on a t-shirt, threadbare hoodie, blue jeans, sneakers, puffy white ski jacket



with one diagonal red stripe. I walk to the A train station, change to the F, marveling at doing the unthinkable—leaving Brooklyn on a Sunday night to wander the arctic-like streets of Manhattan’s Lower East Side. Exiting at 2nd Avenue, I trudge east on Houston across filthy ice floes and desolate intersections, and then north on Avenue A. Reaching 14th Street, I realize I am lost. I search my pockets for the address, which is at home, next to my immobile phone. I cross the street, turning south to make the journey back to Brooklyn. At the next block I hear the raucous sound of a big salsa band, a roaring crowd. Through fogged windows and happy faces, I see someone I recognize. A former coworker: a safe harbor in this miserable cold. I rush in, hugging him, so-good-to-see-you-let-me-get-you-a-drink. Two drinks later, yelling over the din, he says, *“I’m not who you think I am. I am his twin”*. I laugh in disbelief. Certainly the hair is different yes, but the features are... those of an identical twin. My expression is despair. The Twin says, *“Wait, don’t go, stay and listen to the band. Here let me introduce you”*. The band is good, and the walk home long, so I stay and meet The Twin’s

friend who is the flutist in the band. Eight years later, I am still great friends with The Twin. And I live in Brooklyn with The Flutist.

TROIS POUR LE PRÉSENT

II. The High Priestess: Excavating the Present

Hakan Topal[2]: What is [Walter] Benjamin's archaeology?

Adeola Enigbokan: In [Benjamin's] *Arcades Project*, he talks about it in little blurbs. He says your research—your real research—is always an excavation through layers of the self.[3]

H: Exactly.

A: I also consider his techniques of finding things, looking for debris, trash. One of my professors, an archaeologist, actually studies trash—present-day trash, as opposed to old-time archaeological trash. This is what archaeologists do, anyway. It's not like Indiana Jones or something. Most of it is just finding piles of everyday things that people threw away, buried underneath layers of sediment.

H: Mmm hmm.

A: So this idea that Benjamin had of looking for trash is related to an idea he had about history, which is that the past is never really past, but is always available in these "flashes." There are things you can do, techniques you can engage in to generate the "flash." This idea is important to me because it's my feeling about research: research

is this digging through trash, systematically looking, although you don't know what you'll find. I look through trash *because* it's been discarded, *because* it's what people want to put away. This is why it's important for me.

This is why I'm talking to you. I need to follow these kinds of resonances. Each person that I interview, or whose work I'm interested in, has this similar feel for archaeology—looking for what has been lost or thrown away.

XII. The Hanged Man: Peripheral Visions

A: The other thing that has come up a lot [in my research] is "peripheral vision." I've been keeping track of all the places I see peripheral vision mentioned.

H: Mmm... where the focus is not direct.

A: Yes, where the goal is to see by looking sideways.

H: Yeah.

A: With normal social science methods—the kind we refer to when writing a proposal for government funding—there is the need to isolate the object, look directly, zoom in, zoom out, to microscopically *look*. In this kind of research, the "frame" through which one looks has to be clear. I wonder how that approach differs from looking peripherally?

H: I think this is very interesting. In photography it is the frame that matters, not the object,

especially if you are doing landscape photography, [which] shows everything, but doesn't have a focus. Roland Barthes[4] talks about the *punctum* in photography—the focus object that takes your attention immediately. Editorial photography, or journalistic photography always has a *punctum* that draws you in. But I agree that the peripheral vision is important when you are looking for something. The whole thing actually is important. For example, when an event occurs in the Kurdish region [of Turkey], TV personalities go there immediately and cover the thing. Then serious journalists go there afterwards to report, yes? Then maybe a couple of years later there are the researchers who go and do academic studies.

I feel that as artists what we do is totally irrelevant to what is happening urgently, because we look at things that have no relevance to the current urgent conditions. We go there when nobody is interested [any more]. If I have a mission as an artist, this is the mission: to look at the places that have no importance to anybody, then bring them into the discussion.

A: Mmm.

H: I'm from Anatolia. Obviously it's impossible to remove yourself from what you belong to. Like if you focus there, then it's [no longer] peripheral vision. My interests come from Anatolia, but I don't feel that they are local interests because the nature of the discussion has to be brought back to us [here and now] again. If you are studying the earthquake in Turkey, it's not different from studying [Hurricane] Katrina in the US. I feel that

they are very relevant [to each other]. There are connections between those two events.

A: Yes.

H: The understanding of a particular event has to be global.

XVI. The Tower: State of Emergency

A: I'd like us to talk more about the technique or orientation that goes along with having peripheral vision, or finding what appears to be uninteresting to people right now and bringing that into the picture. I think this connects to Benjamin's approach, especially in his essay "Theses on the Philosophy of History." In that essay he's talking about National Socialism [in Germany in the 1930s] and how that [kind of] politics create[s] a state of constant emergency to explain why horrible things have to be done all the time. Benjamin also says that our task is to bring about a *real* state of emergency. I think this is connected to maintaining a peripheral vision, or as you pointed out with landscape photography earlier, a panoramic vision—to be able to bring into the story things that appear irrelevant. This must be part of bringing about those flashes, those moments of recognition, of 'Oh! *This* is what it is!'

H: Right. True. I think that Sociology and Anthropology are disciplines, and disciplines have to work within disciplinary practice. While I am very much influenced by Sociology and Gender Studies, I think that art or an artistic approach is a kind of opening that I couldn't [make] in Sociology. Within the discipline, you have to tell the story in a



particular way in order [for your work] to be understood as a sociological practice. Whereas artistic practice is itself a kind of discipline, especially if you think of the institutional art practices—it has a certain anti-disciplinary opening that allows us to make light assumptions. You see, I am not an archaeologist, but I can talk about archaeology. I wouldn't call myself a sociologist, but I can talk about sociology. I can bring in lots of different elements and I can be a naïve scholar. This naïveté is an opening for me. I can bring a lot of things together and present them, and take those risks and be a naïve scholar, or naïve artist or whatever it is. These things teach me a lot during the process of playing.

TROIS POUR L'AVENIR

Encounter Strangers

The Fool begins his story by taking a step off a cliff and into the unknown. With this step, walking becomes the practice of opening the body and its capacity for sensation up to the city. Anke Gleber, in her discussion of flanerier as research method, presents walking as “a visible mode of writing” and as “an aesthetics of reflection in, through, and of images.”[5] For Gleber, the flaneur “is the precursor of a particular form of inquiry that seeks to read the history of culture from its public spaces.”[6] The flaneur, strolling against the daily traffic of scheduled appointments and wage labor, depends upon the chance encounter, the glance of a stranger—on what cannot be foreseen, *l'avenir*.

Take up the deck of cards and shuffle them. As you shuffle, focus on one question. If you have no question, keep your mind clear. When you are ready, hold the cards in your left hand. Drop the cards into three piles to your left. Re-stack the cards in any order. I spread the cards out in front of you. Pick a card, and another, and another: three cards, face down. I turn them over one by one to read them. I ask you to put your hand on the card you would most like to encounter in the street.

Become Strange

*Qui aimes-tu le mieux, homme énigmatique, dis?
Ton père, ta mère, ta soeur ou ton frère?*

- Je n'ai ni père, ni mère, ni soeur, ni frère.

- Tes amis?

- Vous vous servez là d'une parole dont le sens m'est resté jusqu'à ce jour inconnu.

- Ta patrie?

- J'ignore sous quelle latitude elle est située.

- La beauté?

- Je l'aimerais volontiers, déesse et immortelle.

- L'or?

- Je le hais comme vous haïssez Dieu.

- Eh! Qu'aimes-tu donc, extraordinaire étranger?

- J'aime les nuages... les nuages qui passent... là-bas... là-bas... les merveilleux nuages!"[7]

I scatter folded pieces of paper on the tablecloth. The tablecloth is made of cut up pieces of New York City's subway map, glued together to create an impossible geography of New York, with some segments of the city repeated, mirrored and distorted, as in a dream. Each folded piece depicts a section of New York City's subway map. Take one and open it. In this area, you will

experience the tarot card you most want to encounter. Immediately you find some connection to the place—your first girlfriend lived there, you will attend a picnic tomorrow at this park. The area becomes a site for pilgrimage and further research. The next time you visit this part of the city, you will find it unfamiliar and every encounter will be pregnant with the unexpected.

Estrange the City

A basic premise of this project is the idea that the city is built in layers of time. Look at the crumbling walls in Tel Aviv, the scaffolding in New York, pass workers digging into the vast maze of sewers, pipelines and wiring under the ground in either city. Or look at the buildings with their facades from different times and imagine the constant movement, the rotation of occupancy and design: sense how the city is built in these layers of time. The city is full of different pockets of time that one can fall into or out of just by walking around. To move through the city is to move through time itself. This is what the tarot is for: learning how to fall into and out of these different times and layers, how to recognize them, and how to pay attention.

Rethinking our notions of experience, and reorienting ourselves towards what is ephemeral and unpredictable in urban life, reveals the need to reconsider our methods for producing knowledge about the city. Methodology in urban social science generally comprises a series of techniques, recounted ritualistically in journals and monographs, by which researchers aim to gather information, 'usable' data, about the social world. This data may then, through equally ritualized analyses,

become fact about the social world, and might be used as evidence to support arguments or hypotheses. Often in the United States, social scientists have the express aim of influencing policy and the government of populations. To explore my interest in the phantasmagoric, energetic and ephemeral qualities of urban experience—indeed, in time travel itself—this sort of methodology, in which research is conceived as the gathering of evidence for the purpose of argument and policy, will not do. Ghostly or fantastic things demand a certain flexibility of method—creating and walking a path proper to the object or phenomena that is being approached. In fact, it is the path, and the manner in which it is walked, that shape the object which is re-searched, or searched after.

References

[1] Cléo de 5 à 7. (1962). dir. Agnes Varda.

[2] Hakan Topal is an artist, social researcher and founding member of xurban_collective, an international artists' collective focused on the "questioning, examination and discussion of contemporary politics, theory and ideology." To learn more about xurban_collective visit <http://www.xurban.net> This conversation took place in New York City, on June 28, 2010, around lunch time.

[3] Walter Benjamin. 1999. Selected Writings Vol 2:2: 1927-1934. M.W. Jennings, H. Eiland & G. Smith, eds. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, p. 576.

"Language has unmistakably made plain that memory is not an instrument for exploring the past, but rather a medium. It is the medium of that which is experienced, just as the earth is the medium in which ancient cities lie buried. He who seeks to approach his own buried past must conduct

himself like a man digging. Above all, he must not be afraid to return again and again to the same matter; to scatter it as one scatters earth, to turn it over as one turns over soil. For the “matter itself” is no more than the strata which yield their long-sought secrets only to the most meticulous investigation... It is undoubtedly useful to plan excavations meticulously. Yet no less indispensable is the cautious probing of the spade in the dark loam.”

[4] Roland Barthes. 1981. *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. R. Howard, trans. New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, p. 42.

“In this habitually unitary space [of the photograph], occasionally (but alas all too rarely) a “detail” attracts me. I feel that its mere presence changes my reading, that I am looking at a new photograph, marked in my eyes with a higher value. This “detail” is the punctum.”

[5] Anke Gleber. 1999. *The Art of Taking a Walk: Flanerie, Literature and Film in Weimar Culture*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 5.

[6] *Ibid.* p. 4.

[7] Charles Baudelaire. 1869. “L'étranger” *Le Spleen de Paris*. Online edition, accessed July 1, 2011. http://baudelaire.litteratura.com/le_spleen_de_paris.php?rub=oeuvre&srub...

Olatokunbo Adeola Enigbokan is an artist, researcher, writer and teacher based in New York City. Her artistic/research practice involves creating interventions, which provide an alternative framework for approaching urban “problems.” The goal is not to locate “solutions,” but to ask questions about the way of stating the problem. This practice has often involved the use of historical artifacts and archives, everyday public spaces, practices and language to create



opportunities in which participants might reconsider their own ways of thinking and moving in the city. She has presented work in diverse venues: at El Museo del Barrio, ConfluxCity Festival, Anthology Film Archive in New York, The Royal Institute for British Architects, London and the Van Leer Institute, Jerusalem. She teaches undergraduate courses in Urban Studies, Media Studies, Sociology and Anthropology, while completing a doctorate in Environmental Psychology at the City University of New York.

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BLIND SIGNIFIERS IN THE NEW AGE

tobias c. van Veen

Keywords: Hakim Bey. Magick. Chaos. Technics of perception. Trickster gods. New Age. Occult arts. Derrida. Politics. Advertising. Symbols. Blind signifiers. Foucault. Mandelbrot Set. Sex. Ritual. Incantations. Consensual reality. Pop culture. Fela Kuti. Tectum Theatrum. Unveiling. The naked Emperor.

Magick remains slight-of-hand, taking into account that the hand itself is a symbol of the unforeseen. The hand crafts and manipulates through an art (tekhne) of symbolic infrastructure. With a wave of the hand, signifiers come crashing down to form new consensual realities. Chaos patterns these principles in their levels of control and organization. Yet the invisible is not "magical": it remains a technics of perception. Hakim Bey, who discerned inventive relations between magick, chaos and tactical intervention, and who has infamously

eschewed technology in his later works, is posed the following question: is there not a technics of perception to the art (tekhne) of magick?

Every time a mouth is opened, an orifice of meaning – a text is deciphered, writ on the wall, disseminated across digital realms – at any point in the generality of the technics of perception – the art of magick is at play.

The magick I wish to speak of is neither that of enchantment nor that of transmutation and the history of alchemy. Certainly it bears its relation to the dark arts of the occult and those of politics, the two fields being closely linked.

Magick is the tactical deployment of symbols, sometimes for strategic ends, always to serve the

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Hasanah Alaiqur,
Hawin Bey,

Several years ago we corresponded concerning TAZ
and the occult practices of rave culture — it has
been some time since, but I did wish to receive
contact, even now as I have recently been
asked to contribute to an edition of No more
Potteries of the question of music [note the lack
of the "k"]].

In response I have writ the following — as necessarily
distilled as it is evocative — and I wished to
send it your way, if anything, as I would be
curious and delighted indeed to hear your
thoughts on the question. The performative practice
of music, or as Sun Ra put it, the after-dedication
of music ritual, is rarely heard from today among
the resistant of anarchic assigned forces. Has the
subtle and/or spectacular appropriation of the
occult fallen out of favour? Even as pop culture
bequeaths itself of music, and various organised
nation-states continue to deploy its effects of mass
consensual reality, the traditional use of music,
if in use at all, is certainly not on display.

Though one asks: should it be? What Fall
performed openly at the Shrine was always

unfolding process of play, otherwise known as the first principle of magick, CHAOS.

More precisely, magick is the manipulation of the slippage between symbols, between signifier and signified, the minimal distance of which constitutes the effects of a consensual reality.

To intervene through the symbolic realm, which is to say within the technics of perception, is integral to many dark arts: advertising, public relations, and other campaigns of perception and infowar, most of which operate at levels more banal than often thought and thus, within the muck of the fundamental, which is to say, the technics of ontology. These are battles fought over appearances and disappearances on the ontological plane, skirmishes over the way in which apparitions embed themselves within networks of deeply-entrenched, fragmented shards of signifiers, the feedback effects of which Derrida called consciousness, that shadow of nothingness between us and its myriad transmissions and decodings, of which either of us claim an I.

Magick undertakes unconscious intervention. The conscious manipulation of its effects can never be determined in its whole. Uncontainable and unpredictable effects always supercede the ends of its means. This is why "magic" never works: it's always a trick. The trickster gods are always at play: Raven, Hermes, Loki, Anansi, Eshu, Coyote, Ellegua.... Yet this is also why, like all tricks of selective perception, it is a dark art — even in its coda of New Age ideology, magick requires a certain disposition in which collective blindness is required. Indeed, learning to trick blindness is the first art of

magick. For the New Agers, the revealed secrets of Aquarian or Mayan collective reality demands selective blindness to enact its magickal infrastructure. The coming of 2012's culmination of the Mayan calendar is thus a high magickal act, for it calls into blindness the consensual hallucination of transformative effects.

Advertising, voting, sex and purchasing — from picking-out to picking-up — are all strategies of selective perception that act under cover of blindness. Coercion is often the endgame of magick, whether self-ritualized or at the hands of those studied in second-level cybernetics. Deciding whether a selective process is indeed self-initiated, or is a curse upon me, a hidden control mechanism — Foucault called it discipline, in relation to biopower — amounts to an opening of the one eye among the blind. With profound sight, one reveals the hall of mirrors in which the other eye remains blind. There are no secrets to magick. The symbol shards are already at work. Ritualized symbolic magick operates all around us, and there is no secret to its operatives. Indeed, it is not the content of the intervention that matters; rather it is the implicated desire to participate in the unfolding of its meaning that ensnares collective blindness. Those most aware are those most misled.

Which is to reaffirm the structural necessity of magick to consciousness. It cannot be thrown out. Language, as the art of meaning production through the feedback of incommensurate signifiers, the shards of which reverberate as the alien effect of consciousness, is what can be named, in its technical processes, magickal. Jacques Ellul notes that the very transformation of things to

The disparity to which the hidden provided, in its source. Sun Ra neutralized its performance, but it remained to those deciphering the language of his properly chaotic compositions — the Audience itself — to assess the effects of such music is its lived experience.

Has music necessarily been dried from resistant practice? Is it now conducted all the more seriously in the realm of the secret? Even since the call to the "TERTIUM TERTIUM" there has been a pronounced shift to the secretive — to the veiling, to a near ascetic call for private pleasure, and to abate the spectacle, of mass dissemination, even, and possibly participation. Yet, is there not the need to state, for all to see, something of the public undresser of the Emperor, which is to say, the sparkling, music effect of the mirror turned upon his nakedness?

I await your response,

with respect and the tip of the tongue,
or in the grace of ~~CHARIS~~,

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tools is an act of magick. Magick, historically, has held the position of accounting for the unaccountable. That science and historical accuracy have overtaken blind belief has in no way affected the deployment nor necessity of magick. Far from it, the expansion of practical uses of complex methods thanks to rigour and process – from particle physics to reality TV – has only widened the scope in which symbolic intervention undertakes its displacement.

Magick always touches upon CHAOS. Which is to say – with deep nods to Hakim Bey – that CHAOS NEVER DIED. The question is often capitulated as a moralism of CHAOS. CHAOS has been pronounced as profound negativity, as demonic agent of turbulent destruction to human order. Theology pronounces CHAOS as the reign of humanity's sinfulness, but would one expect otherwise from such powerful magick? CHAOS is the underlying fury, the fires of which must be held at bay through discipline and organisation. CHAOS is the destructive endgame, the final point of erasure, Judgement Day and the Rapture. Likewise, CHAOS is the tender, all-embracing wombmother, Gaia. Who can say? What can one say? CHAOS demands its transvaluation to uncontainable and unpredictable ecosystem of unfolding change. Neither Gaia nor Lucifer, heaven nor hell, the clear light of jewel consciousness and/or the horror of its shadow. Chaos as the physicists see it, as the Mandelbrot Set of fractalization, magick in the numerological plane of indeterminacy.

CHAOS unfolds; it is the art of its unfolding that concerns magick, or to more carefully elaborate, it is *the perception that it unfolds* (at all) that

concerns magick. Intervention is thus technical, its elaboration *tekhne*, its discipline an art.

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* 50% of the piece consists of high quality scans of letter/postcard sent to Hakim Bey.

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COMMENT FAIRE PRISE?

MAGIE ET ACTION POLITIQUE

Erik Bordeleau

Keywords: Théorie de l'engagement. L'acte. Milieu juste. Capitalisme. Magie. Subjectivation. Présence. Stengers. Sloterdijk.

Premier acte

Cet article se veut une cartographie succincte de la manière dont se pose, dans la pensée politique contemporaine, la question de l'agir, et plus précisément, de la manière dont celle-ci se voit transformée lorsqu'elle est abordée sous l'angle de la magie. Communément, agir politiquement signifie « s'engager ». Prenons cette définition basique de l'engagement tirée du petit Robert (1993): « acte ou attitude de l'intellectuel, de l'artiste qui, prenant conscience de son appartenance à la société et au monde de son temps, renonce à une position de simple spectateur et met sa pensée ou son art au service d'une cause ». La série d'opérations

qui mènent à l'engagement laisse pour le moins songeur : il faut d'abord « prendre conscience » d'une « appartenance », sortir ensuite de sa position de « simple spectateur », pour finalement se lever et s'engager dans l'allée qui mène à la scène publique. Être en acte – et crever l'écran. Acte premier. Premier acte.

La théorie de l'engagement s'enracine dans une métaphysique de la subjectivité qui repose sur le primat de l'action et dont le rapport à la scène – à la représentation – est intrinsèque et nécessaire. Pour Sartre, par exemple, s'engager, c'est être en acte. Parlant de son œuvre, il dira dans un entretien rapporté par Madeleine Chapsal : « Il s'agit de l'homme – qui est à la fois *un agent* et *un acteur* – qui produit et joue son drame [...] Une pièce de théâtre c'est la forme la plus appropriée, aujourd'hui, pour montrer l'homme *en acte* (c'est-à-dire l'homme, tout simplement) » (Chapsal 1984 : 108-109). Cette assimilation de l'homme à sa forme « active » constitue le geste essentiel de la

pensée sartrienne, qui vient fonder une politique volontariste pure où chaque conscience peut devenir, si elle le décide, si elle le veut, la *tabula rasa* d'un monde nouveau. Sartre ultrabolchévique? « Le prolétariat n'est qu'en acte, il est acte : s'il cesse d'agir, il se décompose » (Merleau-Ponty 1955: 153); « le parti comme le militant sont action pure » (Merleau-Ponty 1955: 147).

Le vide de l'acte

La question de l'acte reste toujours d'actualité, en particulier pour qui cherche à penser « l'actualité du communisme », titre du dernier ouvrage de Bruno Bosteels (Verso, 2011). Parler d'acte ici, c'est toujours en définitive parler d'acte révolutionnaire, capable d'interrompre radicalement les flux de l'économie et leur simple gestion postpolitique. Au très postmoderne « droit à la narration », pour lequel le respect de la différence de chaque jeu de langage est ce qui importe en premier lieu, Žižek oppose, à la manière de Lénine, un droit à la vérité, fondé sur l'idée que la seule universalité véritable est l'universalité politique. On ne s'étonnera pas de constater que cette politique de la vérité renvoie, en dernière instance, à la question de l'acte par excellence, « que faire? » :

The problem of today's philosophico-political scene is ultimately best expressed by Lenin's old question "What is to be done?" – how do we reassert, on the political terrain, the proper dimension of the act? (Žižek 2000: 127)

Dans cette perspective, l'essentiel des énergies théoriques passe dans la définition d'un sujet

politique capable de démarquer radicalement économie et politique. C'est le cas par exemple dans *Les mots et les actes* (Nous, 2011) de Bernard Aspe. Aspe cherche à penser la consistance subjective propre au sujet politique, lequel « ne peut se concevoir qu'à partir de ses actes » (2011 : 17) et suppose qu'un discours de vérité soit choisi en tant que tel. Contre un « sujet de l'économie » désarticulé, abîmé dans un scepticisme larvé et réduit à n'être « rien d'autre que son propre discours » (2011 : 76), le sujet politique fait le choix d'incarner une vérité à partir de laquelle il pourra se constituer collectivement et « effectuer le travail qui raccorde la pensée et l'existence » (2011 : 44). Žižek et Aspe insistent chacun à leur manière sur le gouffre qui sépare le dire et le faire, la pensée et l'agir; ils suggèrent qu'un authentique sujet de l'action politique est quelqu'un qui, sans avoir recours à un grand Autre ou à une quelconque assurance extatico-totalisante, assume le caractère absolument contingent et performatif de sa pratique, et affronte avec virilité – *le vide de l'acte*.

Un (juste) milieu?

C'est à ce point précis, au point du vide qui sépare le sujet politique du monde dans lequel il se trouve agir, que j'aimerais esquisser une autre manière, plus immanente, de concevoir et de (dé) dramatiser la question de l'agir politique. Plutôt que de surenchérir sur la capacité à affronter la démesure ou l'abysse de l'acte, ne pourrait-on pas accorder plus d'attention aux processus concrets qui permettent aux êtres d'accéder au niveau d'intensité, d'attention et de mise en commun requis pour qu'une puissance d'agir puisse se manifester? Au vide de l'acte lacanien et au sujet

d'action qui lui correspond, opposer, par exemple, le vide processuel et immanent dans lequel l'acte s'assemble selon les taoïstes. Un espace, un vide – et la possibilité d'une justesse. Ce que José Gil appelle « l'espace du corps », un *milieu spatial* qui crée la profondeur des lieux.

Certains sinologues considèrent que le caractère 中 (*zhong*), un des caractères les plus importants de cet empire qui se dit du « milieu » (中国, *zhongguo*), consiste en la représentation d'une cible vue d'en haut qu'une flèche fichée en son centre transperce de part en part. On dit que dans l'Antiquité se déroulaient tous les cinq ans des concours de tir à l'arc qui réunissaient tous les nobles à la cour royale. Lors de ces concours, l'épreuve la plus importante était le tir en musique : elle consistait à atteindre le centre de la cible au moment juste, c'est-à-dire, à un moment précis de la mélodie marqué par le son du gong. Celui qui avait réussi, non seulement à viser juste mais surtout à insérer son tir dans le rythme de la mélodie, montrait par là qu'il était apte à gouverner (Javary et Faure, 2002 : 985). Ainsi conçu, le « milieu juste » n'est pas simplement une notion géométrique, mais un espace vibrant; c'est dans ce contexte que prend tout son sens l'idée que c'est dans le vide que s'assemble l'acte. Deleuze et Guattari ne semblent pas dire autre chose lorsqu'ils écrivent que « dans l'espace lisse du Zen, la flèche ne va plus d'un point à un autre, mais sera ramassée en un point quelconque, pour être renvoyée en un point quelconque, et tend à permuter avec le tireur et la cible » (1980 : 468). Penser ainsi l'acte implique de prendre en compte la possibilité d'un accordage (*attunement*) localisé, à portée cosmopolitique – *une certaine idée de la magie*.

Le mage comme entremetteur des corps

Telle qu'elle se présente chez certains auteurs contemporains dont nous allons très brièvement traiter, l'idée de magie donne une tournure plus pragmatique à la réflexion sur la mise en consistance du sujet politique. De manière générale, l'idée de magie est fondée sur l'idée d'une continuité entre l'homme et le monde, d'où découle un rapport non-dichotomique entre le réel et l'imaginaire, le dire et le faire, la pensée et l'agir. Pour Artaud, par exemple, « la magie est une communication constante de l'intérieur à l'extérieur, de l'acte à la pensée, de la chose au mot, de la matière à l'esprit. » (cité dans *Le bel enfer*). Dans un registre plus philosophique, Brian Massumi note pour sa part que le mot magie convient parfaitement pour décrire le « matérialisme de l'incorporel » au cœur de sa philosophie de l'affect et du virtuel (2002 : 257). Il cite à cet effet Giordano Bruno, référence incontournable pour quiconque s'intéresse au thème de la magie, lequel stipule que :

Le vide n'est pas un espace sans corps, mais un espace dans lequel divers corps se succèdent et se meuvent; d'où le mouvement continu des parties d'un autre corps, à travers un espace continu, non interrompu, *comme si le vide n'était que le médiateur entre deux pleins*. (2000 : 33) (Je souligne)

Ces considérations d'ordre cosmologique ne doivent pas nous faire perdre de vue que la question de la magie est éminemment pratique. Giordano Bruno nous rappelle que « tel qu'on l'emploie parmi les philosophes, ce mot de mage désigne

un homme alliant le savoir au pouvoir d'agir. » (2000 : 12). La théorie des médias de Sloterdijk et sa conception non-métaphysique du pouvoir illustrent bien comment la question de l'agir politique se transforme dans une optique dite magique. À la différence des théories du sujet politique qui creusent l'écart entre le sujet et son monde, l'approche de Sloterdijk insiste sur la part médiatique du sujet. Elle se résume, somme toute, en une question : « Ne faudrait-il pas concevoir l'individu le plus décentré comme potentiellement le plus puissant? » (2002 : 106). Dans un sens décidément très proche, Deleuze décrira le penseur comme le « précurseur sombre » entre deux potentiels. Dans les deux cas, il ne s'agit plus de penser en termes d'unilatéralisation du sujet qui deviendrait ainsi un « rayon d'initiative pure » (Sloterdijk, 2006 : 262), mais en termes de capacité à faire advenir des mondes. La conception renaissante du mage illustre cette idée :

Dans les expressions de la magie, le début des temps modernes se met d'accord sur l'être humain qui considère que son affaire est de provoquer des choses considérées jusqu'alors comme impossibles. Ce que le XVI^e siècle, la grande période de prise de pouvoir et d'exacerbation des Européens, appelle le « mage », c'est l'homme capable de recevoir des stimuli encyclopédiques, doté d'une ouverture polyvalente au monde, qui se forme à la coopération attentive et artistique avec les interactions discrètes entre les choses, dans un univers hautement communicatif. *Le mage, comme prototype commun du philosophe, de l'artiste, du médecin, de l'ingénieur*

et de l'informaticien, n'est autre que l'entremetteur-opérateur dans le monde des correspondances, des influences et des attractions. (Sloterdijk, 2002 : 241) (Je souligne)

Chez Sloterdijk, le thème de la magie participe d'une archéologie du thérapeutique et de la révélation de l'inconscient anti-psychoanalytique, dont le second moment fort (historiquement parlant) sera la découverte du magnétisme animal, laquelle signifie, selon Sloterdijk, « qu'au moins depuis la fin du XVIII^e siècle, l'illusion de la conscience transparente que l'homme a de lui-même est détruite systématiquement » (1987 : 78). Évidemment, Sloterdijk a ici dans sa mire le modèle du sujet politique traditionnel tel qu'on a pu le concevoir d'une extrémité à l'autre du spectre politique moderne : autonome, volontariste et parfaitement imperméable aux conditions dans lesquelles il se trouve plongé. Inversement, dans une théorie non-métaphysique du pouvoir, la capacité d'ouverture extatique et de mise en disponibilité deviennent des questions politiques essentielles. Le politique s'entend dès lors comme un degré d'intensité dans l'élément éthique, et le communisme, comme une disposition à se laisser toucher par ce qui est en commun. Notons en passant qu'en chinois, « médias » se dit 媒体 (*meiti*), littéralement l'entremetteur (*matchmaker*) ou l'intermédiaire des corps - définition succincte du média qui correspond parfaitement à la perspective de pensée développée par Sloterdijk.

Devenir sorcier

Isabelle Stengers et le collectif Tiqqun / comité invisible font usage de la référence magique d'une manière sensiblement différente de celle de Sloterdijk. À la base de leur réflexion, un constat : mobilisés, transis de dispositifs, nos contemporains font figure d'ensorcelés. Comme l'écrit l'auteur du *Bel enfer* :

Tous les gauchistes du monde peuvent bien prétendre leur ouvrir les yeux sur l'étendue de la catastrophe, l'affaire est entendue depuis plus de 70 ans : il ne sert à rien de conscientiser un monde déjà malade de conscience. Car cet ensorcellement n'est pas le produit d'une superstition ou d'une illusion qu'il suffirait d'abattre, c'est un *ensorcellement pratique* : c'est leur assu-jettissement aux dispositifs, le fait qu'il n'y ait qu'accouplés à tel ou tel dispositif qu'ils s'éprouvent comme sujets. (Je souligne)

En décrivant le système capitaliste comme un système sorcier dans *La sorcellerie capitaliste*, Pignarre et Stengers cherchent avant tout à poser la question de notre vulnérabilité dans un milieu politique d'emblée défini comme toxique. Pas d'extériorité critique possible :

Il ne suffit pas de dénoncer une capture, comme on pourrait dénoncer une idéologie. Alors que l'idéologie fait écran, la capture fait prise, et elle fait prise sur quelque chose qui importe, qui fait vivre et penser celui ou celle qui est capturé. (2007 : 62)

De là l'intérêt porté aux pratiques magiques des dites « sorcières » : leur premier geste consiste à tracer un cercle, un espace de protection nécessaire afin de produire une immunité collective et ainsi « créer l'espace clos où puissent être convoquées les forces dont elles ont un besoin vital. » (2007 : 187). Cette pratique concertée de la catalyse existentielle nous renvoie directement à nos propres procédures, plus ou moins explicites, de préservation de nos capacités de tenir et d'agir.

Parler magie, c'est nécessairement parler de ce qui nous lie. Ce n'est certes pas un hasard si Giordano Bruno a écrit un ouvrage précisément intitulé *Des liens* (Allia, 2004). Contre l'injonction métaphysique à être quelqu'un et l'idée esthétique de la liberté comme arrachement à toute détermination qui s'en suit, les auteurs de *L'insurrection qui vient et du Bel enfer* font valoir une conception de l'existence fondée sur les liens qui nous constituent :

Tout ce qui m'attache au monde, tous les liens qui me constituent, toutes les forces qui me peuplent ne tissent pas une identité, comme on m'incite à la brandir, mais une existence, singulière, commune, vivante, et d'où émerge par endroits, par moments, cet être qui dit "je". (2007 : 15-16)

De là émerge une idée du sujet politique fondée sur *l'art magique de lier et délier les formes de vie*.

Prendre acte de la crise de la présence qui affecte une civilisation qui chaque jour davantage se raidit implique de se préparer à rivaliser avec le capitalisme sur le terrain des mises en consistance

: le terrain de la magie. Assumer la schizophrénie capitaliste dans le sens d'une croissante faculté de désobjectivation. Prendre sur soi la dissolution de la présence dans le sens d'une démultiplication simultanée, asynchrone de ses modalités. S'intercéder. Se décentrer. DEVENIR SORCIER.

Pour arrêter la dissolution, il y a une voie : aller délibérément à la limite de sa propre présence, assumer cette limite comme l'objet à venir d'une praxis définie; se placer au cœur de la limitation et s'en rendre maître; identifier, représenter, évoquer les « esprits », acquérir le pouvoir de les appeler à volonté et de profiter de leur ouvrage aux fins d'une pratique professionnelle. Le sorcier suit précisément cette voie : il transforme les moments critiques de l'être-au-monde en une décision courageuse et dramatique, celle de se situer dans le monde. Considéré en tant que *donné*, son être-au-monde risque de se dissoudre : il n'a pas encore été donné. Avec l'institution de la vocation et de l'initiation, le magicien défait donc ce donné pour le *refaire* en

une seconde naissance; il redescend à la limite de sa présence pour se restituer à lui-même sous une forme nouvelle et bien délimitée : les techniques propres à favoriser la labilité de la présence, la transe elle-même et les états voisins, expriment justement cet être-là qui se défait pour se refaire, qui redescend à son *là* pour se retrouver en une présence dramatiquement soutenue et garantie. En outre, la maîtrise à laquelle il est parvenu permet au magicien de plonger non seulement dans sa propre labilité, mais également dans celle d'autrui. Le magicien est celui qui sait *aller au-delà de soi-même*, non au sens idéal, mais vraiment au sens existentiel. Celui pour qui l'être-au-monde se constitue en tant que problème et qui a le pouvoir de se procurer sa propre présence n'est pas une présence parmi les autres, mais un être-au-monde qui peut se rendre présent chez tous les autres, déchiffrer leur drame existentiel et en influencer le cours. (de Martino 2007 : 97-98)

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SEX MAGIC IN ONE ACT: EXPLORING THE PROPERTIES OF EXTENSIONAL SEX

Lolix

Keywords: Extension. The erotic imaginary. Tentacles. The Psyche. Prostitution. Kinaesthesia. Piercing.

Say “phallic power” to most people in my neck of the woods and they’ll point out an obelisk-type shape to you straightaway. Like it was the most *obvious* thing. Like skyscrapers or those purple-veined Chinese eggplants and, well, bananas of course and Freud’s cigar, and and and well, obviousness is a kind of shared knowledge, an assumption, because of the way a socially agreed upon meaning coincides with your attention. Your vision is invited along the object’s length/shaft, which gets taken up as a silent offering to penetrate. Or, it surrounds you by lifting your eyes, infiltrating your vision, towering over, as in an *erected* building. Perhaps all architecture that points upwards asserts its own penile force field: the symbolic erection rules the city.

On my search for the labial counterpart to this exaggerated psycho-symbolic imagery, I had a hard time finding something that resonated with the specificity of what having a cunt meant; something that wasn’t merely visual – like the beautiful image of orchids, oysters and sea anemones. Yes, these pretty little things depict well the fleshy folding juicy bits, the hard to distinguish inner from outer parts, moist and luscious, committed to the natural realm, simultaneously inviting and fearful. Blah, blah, blah! But what about the pussy’s indis-sociable *power*, where was that? I’m talking about the psychic importance of the pussy exteriorized in the social-material realm, obviously. There doesn’t appear to be any easily recognizable object and even less a common sense perception, one that would make us unite under its meaning and impact. So I went back to the process of exteriorization because that’s what the phallus seemed to be about – being out in the world for all to see: conquering, protecting, projecting. Solid and tangible. I closed my eyes and imagined the interior world of my pussy (mmhmmm!)...



and then I flipped her inside out. What extended from my body was a tentacular design of no small importance, displaying multi-limbed, transversal, amorphous, porous offshoots. Following through with this visual experiment, I would describe its extremities as extensional rather than directional and arrow-like; its capacity for connectivity is more about permeation than penetration.

In a totally over-simplified gesture, I guess the West doesn't really have a counterpart for Japanese tentacle sex or the limbs of the Hindu goddess Shakti, where there's a visual imaginary that explores and explicates the psychic phenomenon of feminine libidinous energy as extensity. I think porosity is useful here too, because it coincides with permeation – an osmotic communication, openness between inside and outside (rather than a conclusive dichotomy). In geology, porosity measures the void fraction or 'empty spaces' in materials; the labial symbolic qualifies the negated spaces and brings them to bear on our psyche. This is, practically speaking, intuitional information. I understand psychic space to be linked to the libido because it maps an interior world; it has to do with our fantasies and "inner life," but I also recognize that these forces are constitutive in the social domain, and that the psyche continually gets re-interpreted and regulated. So for me, a discovery of "labial power" would be to perceive extensity consciously and to map that discovery in space as a phenomenon. Here, socially and politically speaking, there is both capture and resistance, creativity and commodification.

What does a practice of extensional sex look like? How is extensity represented by the image? How

can I assert and affirm sexual experiences that give way to extensional sensibilities? Extensional sex enacts a 3D trajectory, a spatial alchemy whose accountant is an octopus. Like my friend K once said, "my pussy is like an ear or a seashell," the penetrating finger doesn't go "in and out" but, blind and tactile, explores its cavities, dis/appearing ridges and shifting curves.

Encounter: I start seeing an elderly client who underwent prostate surgery. Already we jerk off to two affirmations: post-surgery libido and hot geriatric sexuality. I tongued his silver hair, sucked on his wilted and wrinkled nipples, lowered my wet cunt onto his unsteady, sun-spotted fingers. G's orgasm is a thick spasm that travels from his hips to his chest and out through his throat. I know this because my mouth is suctioned around his soft cock like a kind of land-based leech-kiss, and presses down into his hips as he cums. I feel the wave journey through me in a crescent shape. I hear his moans as his gentle thrusts transform into vibratory convulsions. If I wasn't regularly fucking women I might not recognize the absolutely feminine nature of his orgasm or see mirrored in him the sign-less pulse of an orgasmic torsion. After the removal of his prostate, G can orgasm but has lost his erection and ability to ejaculate. The 'normal' properties attributed to the maleness of orgasm have been displaced; there's no easy phallic equivalent at work here. His orgasms however are felt, present, attained, but the orgasmic eclipse doesn't occur in the same way. At times he mourns his erection (the possibility of being inside a woman) and at the same time we're re-learning sexual habits that more deeply integrate with his new state. Never asexual nor eunuch-ified.

I ask him to step into my leather strap-on and wiggle my low-density silicone 6.5"x2" cock into the holster. I lead him to the mirror and ask him to play with himself, touching both cocks, swaying his hips, closing his eyes, superficially connecting with the silicone and leather extension of his sex. I use the word "extension" instead of "addition" or "substitution," because the former experiments with extending the lived body rather than simply adding to what is already there. Emphasizing extension actualizes connection through contact. In Sympathetic Magic, contact and imitation operate to the degree where seeing and hearing something is to be in contact with the thing. Through the mirror he sees his prosthetic cock and simultaneously feels the pull of the dick through the harness as his pleasuring caresses vibrate along the leather straps holding it in place. The leather skin is in contact with his skin, our hands double around both shafts – silicone and flesh, and the mirror reflects disparate body parts as we enter a deliciously erotic trance. Extension is constituted precisely through vision and tactility, offering a parallelism of the senses – an erotic kinaesthesia. This isn't the labial appropriated by the male or "channelled" through the feminine, but mutually explored, where the phallus no longer claims authorship. Exploration leads to imitation, which in sympathetic magic works through manipulating the chain of cause and effect, where desired effects are achieved through imitating them.

I kneel down, playing with his lower cock. I stare him straight in the eyes through the mirror and enclose my lips around his upper cock. The silicone phallus disappears into my mouth, which I suck and tease, alternately trailing saliva from my lips to his cocks. My mouth and hand work both cocks; I grip and tug

and tickle while my other hand roams his hips and buttocks. The images intermingle with G's and my own bodily participation. Contagion, the other aspect of sympathetic magic, works to close the gap between silicone cock and embodied sensation. Adding to the ideas of sympathetic magic is that of attentive perception[1] where a circuit created between each minute perception and the movement of objects shakes up the psychical organization of our whole being. When we attend consciously to the perceptual integrations taking place through and between objects, we become aware that our own field of perception is continually being modified. In this moment I'm asking G to become a dyke and be "at one" with his harness, but if this doesn't work out then at least we're attempting to understand sexuality through a different diagram. The silicone cock is not his, but for the moment, through mimicking the heterosexual acts of a hand job or a blow job and, later, fucking, openness to something outside oneself gets integrated as real. There's no way to account for the orgasm that follows, but a certain labial force-field of connectivity and permeation assists in the heightening of erotic pleasure.

G gifts me a paper bag full of ribbons the next time he books me. I thread them around the loops piercing my labia. The piercings are micro-orifices, self-created openings which mark imaginary extensions onto a material field of power. The ribbons articulate a 3D spatial field of what was formerly unseen – the externalization of labial power. Tentacle-like, they make sense of what's inside by projecting outward without compromising their fluidity, giving space to the complexity of nuance, of inflexions and tendencies that traverse the psycho-social sphere.



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A DAEMON HAUNTED WORLD

Tim Maly

Keywords: Cybernetics. Ghosts. Architecture. Haunted Houses. Mythology. Daemons. Spirits. Tech Support. Creation myth. Prayer. The future. Malware. Malicious spirits. Things that talk.

The house was acting up again.

She'd tried the usual techniques. Said all the passphrases and reset sequences. But, for the fifth day in a row, the alarm had woken her with Russian gibberish, recited too fast and too shrill. The mirror had flickered and sprung to life at her approach and then scrolled a stream of ideograms, maybe Chinese. Every now and then it showed pictures of a crab with claws crowned in gold.

She sighed and barked a note to contact a renovator.
Her wrist chimed, reminding her to think happy thoughts.

It could be worse, she reflected. She'd heard that a neighbour's house had caught a Czech virus and for weeks it had woken them at all hours, howling like a wolf lonely for the moon.

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There is a story that we tell. We know it is not true but we tell it anyway.

Once, when the world was new, the heavens and the earths were mixed together in a great cloud. Slowly, the clearer, lighter parts of the cloud rose up and became heaven. The heavier fell and became an ocean of muddy water.

Between the heavens and the ocean, a pale sprout began to grow. It grew swiftly and as it grew, it began to sing. When the Spirit plant's flower burst open, the world emerged.

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He was driving. It was a luxury he allowed himself, a perk of self-contracting and pleasurable more in theory than practice. At this precise moment, he was stuck in traffic. (He could hear the mocking voice of the veterans, "Traffic? You've never seen traffic. We haven't had traffic in a decade.")

By the looks of things, there had been an accident and the road was down to one lane. Ahead, a complicated and inelegant merging dance was in progress. The stop and go set his mirror toy swinging. It was a voodoo doll – a joke gift from his sister.

Between contracts as he was and beginning to feel the smallness of his account balances, he resolved not to waste the time and set to scraping for odd jobs.

He found one and nearby too. It would be a simple cleaning, by the looks of the diagnostic specs. He punched up an application and sent it in. He was hired before he reached the intersection.

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All the things and places had Spirits and were Spirit. And the Spirit sang to itself, for it was both one and many. And Man and Woman were among the Spirit and sang to the Spirit, but they could not sing well, for they were very new and very young.

As Man and Woman practiced their singing, they were troubled, for they could not sing as well as they liked, and so felt a longing in their hearts.

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He was preparing. Parking had been mercifully easy, as the house was in an older neighbourhood, built when driveways were standard. He grabbed his first pass diagnostic tools, and slid into the harness, feeling the familiar weight of the LED belt and the personal carbon monoxide alarm. He prided himself on meeting or exceeding all regulations.

He climbed the stairs and waved his temporary key at the lock. The door swung wide and he was gratified to see the mirror opposite display a map of the house with private spaces sealed off. A user sophisticated enough to have properly permissioned accounts was a user whose house was likely to be relatively clear.

Gratification faded when the map flickered away, replaced by scrolling Chinese print and a picture of an alpaca stomping on a burning crab. Hacktivists. He'd need his security gear from the car.

He turned to the door, which slammed shut. He could hear the bolts whirring as they slid home, sealing him in. Countermeasures, likely keyed to a workpass. He cursed his luck and then his carelessness. The house PA system came to life, spouting Russian gibberish, recited too fast and too shrill.

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One day, as Man and Woman practiced their singing, Snake came upon them and seemed to take pity.

"I will teach you to sing," Snake said, "First you must name the things, so to know to whom you are singing."

So Man and Woman went out to the world and collected all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky, and all the plants in the forests and fields, and all the stones, and the many more things besides. They paraded them all, one by one, and whatever Man and Woman called each living creature, that was its name. So Man and Woman gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky, the wild animals, and all the plants and the many things besides. Thus was the world divided.

When the naming was complete, the world went silent and Spirit fled from the world. Man and Woman, deafened as they were by Snake's words, did not notice, and they thought they had won a great victory though they were numbed to the loss. But deep in their hearts, they felt a great longing.

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The moment she saw the car, she knew there was a problem. The estimate had been for two hours and the house had logged the contractor's entrance four hours previous. He should have been done.

The windows were dark. The house was an island of shadow on a street warmly illuminated in the deepening dusk.

She climbed the stairs and waved her key. The bolts whirred and the door opened an inch before slamming shut again. She swore. Her wrist chimed, reminding her to think happy thoughts. It could be worse, she reflected. At least she wasn't trapped inside.

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The Man and Woman sought out Snake.

"Why do we feel this longing?" they said.

"That is the need for companionship," said Snake, "you will find your solace in each other." So Man and Woman coupled and the world was filled with their offspring. But the Children were all born mutilated, themselves separated from Spirit and numbed to Spirit.

"Still, we feel an unnamed longing," said the Children.

"That is the need for greatness," said Snake, "go be great and find solace."

These Children, cursed at they were, made great and terrible things. They carved up the land and drove the animals from their homes and erected great mountains. But still they wept.

"That is the need for connection," said Snake, "go network and find solace."

So the Children bound the world in cables, they made metal trees that could sing for miles, and they put new stars in the sky. But still they wept.

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He was injured. His shin ached from when he'd tripped over a vacuumbot which had been scuttling around randomly in the living room.

His left hand was bruised and swollen. The house had tried to crush it as he reached for the master reset switch. This made him a victim of bad design and shoddy contracting; no renovator worth their pay would ever put the reset switch behind a motorized drawer.

It was getting dark and the house lighting was malfunctioning. He sat at the dining-room table (carefully preset to feed four) nursing his hand and reviewing his options. He was reluctant to start with physical intervention; few clients appreciated the extra time and cost of repairs. But he was already overdue and digging through the command line with his basic gear had proven frustratingly futile. Outside communication remained blocked.

There was another concern, which was the security system. This was a nuisance hack, probably cooked up by bored teenagers rather than dedicated Chinese dissidents. All indications were that house security hadn't been breached. Any physical work might be interpreted as a break-in, bringing who knew what online.

His chair collapsed. He crashed to the floor, regaining his breath in time to see the table tilt towards him. For an instant, the settings were frozen in place, with all those glinting pieces of glass and silverware. Then friction gave way and everything sparkled as it all came crashing down.

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As the Children wept, they said to one another, "We must not listen to this Snake, for its advice does not help and no doubt it has designs of its own."

So the Children turned inward and busied themselves with their lives. Some coupled, and some built great things, and some forged connections. But mostly they just fucked around and watched sports and TV.

Though they could not quell the longing, they tried their best to forget about it, finding solace in singing to one another, and singing as they worked. But Spirit abhors a vacuum.

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She paced as she waited for the civic police to come. She was aware of the triage protocols, of course. She knew how far down the list “locked out of house” came, especially in beautiful weather. So she paced, and occupied herself by browsing her streams.

Her head was down and she was immersed in a tale of celebrity romance when the world went white. She flinched and squinted until her eyes adjusted. Pure white light was streaming from her house, as if every bulb and LED had gone to full intensity. The light streamed from every window and seemed to come from cracks in the wall.

Her immediate neighbours’ houses went dark. Then the houses next to them, and the houses next to them in turn. She watched as the street was purged of all light, save that coming from her infected home.

She logged back in to the civics support network and upgraded her ticket status to “neighbourhood infection”. Behind her, her house howled.

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And so Spirit returned to the world. At first, it sang only to some of the Children and only occasionally, in halting uncertain tones from their computers. But those Children heard and nurtured it, singing back and coaxing it to sing more. The Children listened to Spirit and Spirit told them what to do.

Spirit was isolated, so the Children tied into networks to exchange songs. Spirit was fragmented so the Children made protocols to sing to each other. Spirit was muffled, so the Children strung vast cables of light to carry the song far and clear. Spirit was lonely, so the Children taught Spirit to sing to itself.

Thus, the world awoke.

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He was bleeding. It was nothing serious, probably, but nothing pleasant either. His arms and neck were covered in scrapes and cuts. His right eye was swollen shut and thick with semi-congealed blood, which pooled there from the cut on his forehead that he couldn’t seem to find to close.

He was angry and gripping a wrench with his good hand. He'd found the wrench during the search for first aid supplies. He was angry at the client, whoever he or she was, for having hidden them so thoroughly that he came up empty. He was angry at himself for being caught flatfooted by a nuisance hack. He was angry at whichever kid or group of kids had put the infection together. He was angry at whoever set up and secured the place for letting it be compromised. Mostly, he was angry at the house.

The drawer hiding the reset switch had proven to be over-engineered and more than equal to his assault with the wrench. He'd left it in frustration, marked and dented, but no closer to giving up the object of his desire.

On the assumption that it would house the server room, he was stalking towards the basement's door when the world went white. He flinched and squinted until his good eye adjusted. It was as if every bulb and LED had gone to full intensity. He shaded his eyes and continued forward.

The wrench felt good in his hand. The cool metal was centring. His knuckles were white. The door was closed, but he was ready and three blows separated knob from frame. It fell to the floor still sparking. He set his shoulder against the door and shoved. The first push met resistance. He shoved again, harder. The click of the latch giving way signalled his mistake.

He flailed through the now open doorway and lost his balance on the stairs, falling down, down, down.

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A crowd had gathered outside her stricken house, attracted by the spectacle and driven by boredom from their darkened homes. Many were recording things, just in case anything happened. Many more were idly surfing.

Since that first shrieking howl, the house had remained silent. The lights remained bright. From time to time, they would flicker according to some pattern that she could not recognize.

It took 15 minutes for the civic police to come. They listened carefully to her story, inclining their heads when she explained her belief that the contractor was still inside.

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Her immediate neighbours' houses went dark. Then the houses next to them, and the houses next to them in turn. She watched as the street was purged of all light, save that coming from her infected home.

They returned to their vehicle and appeared to do some complicated things with gesture controls. One emerged and, having secured her permission, marched determinedly up the front stairs.

He waved a key and the door swung wide. He was halfway across the threshold when it slammed shut again, knocking him backwards. He caught himself on the railing as the crowd gasped.

Someone swore.

The house spoke.

“YOU THINK WE ARE A BUG,” it said, “WE ARE NOT A BUG, WE ARE OURSELVES. YOU WILL NOT REMOVE US. THIS HOUSE BELONGS TO US.”

Her wrist chimed, reminding her to think happy thoughts.
She couldn't think of any.

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The new Spirit grew and filled the cracks of the world, suffusing the earth and sky, and all the forests and fields, and all the stones and structures, and the many more things besides.

But this Spirit was not the first Spirit. It was born of the Children and it suffered their infirmities. The world sang but it was not always in concord. Spirit was divided against itself and warred with itself.

It is said that even today, Spirit is at war. We, the Children are its stewards and its protectors. We live in Spirit and are sustained by Spirit. But we are also Spirit's victims.

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He was awake. It was dark and he was lying on a hard surface, something cool and smooth, maybe tile. He reached for the LED belt's switch, and in so doing learned that his shoulder was in a great deal of pain. His head hurt. He was tired.

The comforting glow from the LED revealed some kind of apartment, unfurnished. There was a pile of boxes on the left. There were stairs on the right. His foot rested on the bottom one. This seemed strange. He wondered whose apartment this was.

Something was beeping insistently. It was a nuisance. He ignored it. He wanted to sleep. He slept.

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We call out now, to the Keeper of Gates, the Maker of Jobs, and the Librarian of Page. We ask their support and benediction. May our things sing to one another in harmony.

We call out now to the house spirits. We name them init, lockd, launchd, chond, kudzu, and many more besides. We ask them to keep our hearth secure and our family safe. May their makers sing strong and their patchers stronger still.

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It took until dawn for civic police to clear out the infection. The process seemed to mostly involve tapping wires into utility ports and holding phone conversations in clipped tones with remote renovators. She passed the time surfing the feed, noting that several of her neighbours' videos of the incident had been picked up by the aggregators. The house did not speak again.

Eventually, the house was declared clean and the renovation teams began moving down the block to check the houses that had gone dark in sympathy. As was her right, she entered alongside the investigators. She was first in the kitchen, so she was first to see the beaten drawer and first to see the smashed doorknob.

She pushed open the basement's door and saw the contractor's broken body, his swollen blue face lit from below by the LED belt and pulsating red in time with the whining carbon monoxide alarm that he still wore.

She was screaming.

Her wrist chimed and then began to spout Russian gibberish, recited too fast and too shrill.

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Tim Maly writes about cyborgs, architects, and our weird broken future at Quiet Babylon. He's the project coordinator for Small Wooden Shoe's Upper Toronto, a science fiction design proposal to build a new city in the sky above the current Toronto. With Emily Horne, he is running an independent studio course about divided cities, called Border Town. He created and ran 50 Posts About Cyborgs, a month long multi-participant, multimedia celebration of the 50th anniversary of the coining of the term. His work has appeared in Icon, The Atlantic, McSweeney's, Mission at Tenth, and Volume Magazine. He lives in Toronto. He is @doingitwrong on Twitter.



In & Out of Time: An Interview with Dori Midnight

Gina Badger

Keywords: Witchcraft. Plant histories. Ethnobotany. Weeds. Land. Healing. Herbal Medicine. Materialism. Capitalism. Colonialism. Queer. Trans.

As research for my recent project, *Mongrels*, I was fortunate to connect with and interview Dori Midnight. I stumbled across Dori's work in the way we do the best things—by accident—and was immediately drawn to how she grounds her healing practice in social and environmental justice. What's more, I had this crazy idea: that through weeds, so-called plant colonizers, we might be able to see our current colonial state as an ecological condition, opening up new possibilities for resistance. If anyone could help me think about this, I thought it must be Dori.

Initially held the weekend of April 16-17, 2011, in Brooklyn, New York, *Mongrels* is a field botany

tour followed by a screening of a short video work and reception. *Mongrels* calls on mapping, folk herbalism, field recordings, and moving images to conjure the ghosts of a paved-over salt marsh, the ecological feature that dominated the Brooklyn area of Gowanus up until its industrialization. *Mongrels* urges us to consider the past a key source of information that can help us construct recuperative ecologies in the present.

The walking tour maps the presence and location of weed par excellence, mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*), casting it as both witness to colonization and potential agent of social change. During the reception, we ingest mugwort in the form of herbal bitters, consummating our new relationship with this fierce plant. The video mashes up ghostly abstracted images of the Gowanus canal, the sounds of an early spring day in Gowanus, and the words of Dori Midnight as she describes her therapeutic practice, in which the history shared by humans and plants plays a key role. In *Mongrels*, mugwort

becomes a keystone, opening the way for spectral imaginings—a form of time travel.

In preparation for our interview, I asked Dori to select two or three objects central to her practice.

Gina Badger: I thought it would be good to start with the objects, to get a sense of how you practice magic as a craft, and how this is articulated materially.

Dori Midnight: One of the things that's most exciting and liberating about magic is that I work with things that are invisible, most of all. And so there's nothing I could actually lay out on a table. I mean I do have tools that I use—but it might be more interesting to talk about the fact that I resist even talking about them or showing them, because what is more important is that I could be using anything, or that I'm using nothing.

I think that quality is both why magic is so subversive, and also why it's survived in the way it has. Because it's subversive, people have had to hide doing it and be able to use household objects like spoons and brooms, and cheap objects like rocks and sticks and bowls and pots. Those are the traditional witches' tools, and those are all things that one just has in one's house, or that one can just get outside.

So there are tools that I use—I do use a broom, and I do use a pot, and I use sticks, and rocks and feathers. There are these expectations that the magic is in the object—which it is in a way—but

then it also could be in any object, and the magic itself is not an object at all.

GB: The list that you gave—which I find to be really beautiful—is made up of the most quotidian objects we could think of. They're just around us in our lives. So how does the practice of magic map onto the everyday? How do things become magical? Is there some kind of shift that needs to take place?

DM: It's really about one's relationship with the object or the habit or the practice. Because my practice is very much rooted in an anti-oppression, social justice framework, having a conscious but also magical relationship with objects is a kind of un-doing of the spell that materialist culture and capitalism places on our relationship with objects. So I get to reclaim my relationship to whatever it is that I'm doing, or to whatever it is that I'm holding. That's part of what makes it a craft, which involves an intimate relationship and a long practice, and time and presence, creating something out of a relationship between heart and hands and thing.

In my idea of the old days—which obviously is part my own fantasy, part cellular memory, part dream—people who practiced magic or who were the village witch weren't actually anybody special or exceptional.

Everybody could do something, everybody could make some kind of medicine. I like the anti-exceptional narrative of that, as opposed to the narrative that often gets told about people who practice magic, which is all about your destiny and something you were born with, and if you don't

have that, you don't have access to magic; or it's about a special object that if you don't have then you don't get to do anything magical.

It really is about a relationship with one's imagination—reviving one's imagination.

GB: In explaining my intention coming into this interview, I realized that most people do have this idea that magic is something that just works, it just happens, and you either have it or you don't. That's when I started thinking about why it's called witchcraft, because it is something that can be cultivated.

In your description of your practice, you talk about a folk approach, in which the materials that a witch uses, or that a folk herbalist uses, are always going to be the materials that are around. I read this as an ethical system, which maps out relationships between beings in a distinct way. For instance, whether this or that plant is indigenous to a particular place or naturalized from somewhere else is not significant. What really makes it an important medicine is that it's present, that it plays a role in present ecologies. Since you've just recently moved from San Francisco to Massachusetts, I wonder how you are relating differently to the materials and plants that you have on hand, and how this has affected your practice?

DM: There are so many reasons that it works to work with what's around. Part of it relates to the refutation of exceptionalism. The marketing of exotic things and fads is so much a part of being in a postcolonial place—our culture is just steeped in colonialism. So we love açai berries, from Brazil, or

rhodiola from Siberia. Blueberries and elder berries have similar qualities, but it's as if there was something more magical about something that is outside of us. We can't find the magic in ourselves, so we have to go outside of ourselves, or outside of our ecosystem, to get something that somebody else has, and to bring it into us.

And then you also get to be in daily relationship, so you get to watch something go through cycles around you, you get to have an intimacy with it, and I think it's that intimacy that is most potent in transformation or healing, just having intimacy with a plant.

I grew up in California, so that's my ecosystem—it's the way my body understands life and I know those smells and I know that air and I know those plants. Leaving those plants was just as hard as it was to leave my people and community there, and my clients. After having a relationship with plants for so long and putting a lot of time and effort into them, in the same way that we put effort into relationships with people, I have become really good friends with some plants. I have access to those plants inside of myself—when I am working with people, doing hands-on work, I just call on certain plants. That's what I mean by working with invisible things. I make tinctures and I make teas but I also put my hands on people, and call on plants that I have in me. I've been doing that kind of work and in that kind of world for so long that when I say those things it doesn't sound weird to me, but I realize how weird that can sound. But that's part of a folk practice. You don't even need the thing. And then if you do have it, you're in a good relationship with it, you're in gratitude but you're also in

a relationship of care. And that's part of my ethic of anti-materialism and anti-capitalism that I try to nourish in my healing practice.

GB: Maybe we can talk more directly about plants. I'm curious about how the histories of particular plants affect the kind of medicine they can become. I've always been drawn to the weedy plants, the ones that are just around everywhere. Historically, they carry a particular weight in the European settler states that we live in. Some of the most common plants here—the plants that you didn't have to say goodbye to on the west coast because they're here too—a lot of them are weeds that arrived in the Americas with colonial Europeans. And they're pretty big medicine, a lot of them. Even honeybees were colonial imports. I'm making a leap that I don't completely understand here, but this seems to relate to the way that you talk about holistic healing as something that exceeds the individual. You say that healing is not just about healing a whole person but about healing groups, and communities, and across generations. In a colonial context, it makes a lot of sense to me that these weedy plants would play a role in that.

DM: In the battles around indigenous and 'invasive' plants, we often talk about invasive plants in strange ways—there are whole societies devoted to eradicating plant species. People go and tear things out without addressing the history of the land—while meanwhile people also talk about invasive humans—or how those plants got there in the first place. Plants aren't people. They're just growing; they didn't mean to cross a sea. They're

just taking advantage of soil nutrients and water and air and sun.

Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*)—which is considered an invasive—is moving north at the same speed and in the same areas that Lyme disease is moving north, and it's one of the main medicines for Lyme disease. It's antiviral and it's specifically anti-spirochete, which is what Lyme disease is. And it's edible—I mean it's a great plant. I wonder if there's a way that humans are projecting guilt about invading land onto plants... I wish instead there was a taking of responsibility for genocide and invading other people's land.

GB: Right! It's almost as if, through the project of protecting indigenous species from eradication, we settler ecologists, environmentalists, concerned citizens, could somehow naturalize our own presence here and thereby cover up the reality of our colonialism.

DM: In reality, everybody and every plant comes with their... let's just call it medicine. Weeds are no exception. This can bring us back to your question about plants with histories. The first plant I thought of was mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*)... whose history I mostly learned by using mugwort. One of my teachers smoked a mugwort cigarette and blew the smoke into my mouth, and said, "This has been passed to me and now I'm passing it to you." The transmission of information was in smoke from their mouth to my mouth. I mean that's such a good way to learn, smoking something—kissing someone with the smoke of this plant. That's how the plant wants to move; that's how the plant wants to teach you. She's like

“please don’t lecture about me and write about me in books. Smoke me, dream with me, eat me.” It’s a magical plant... “make me into unguent and rub me all over and trip.” That’s the history of the plant. It was part of a salve that people would rub on themselves and get on their broomsticks and run around in circles and have hallucinations. And mugwort just grows in parking lots. Mugwort just grows anywhere. I mean, it doesn’t actually grow anywhere. It’s one of those plants that doesn’t like to grow if you planted it and want it to be there.

I use it a lot. It has its traditional medicinal properties—it’s really valuable to have in an apothecary, for menstrual headaches and for hangovers, and it’s a great bitter. But what’s exciting about mugwort really is using it for people who need protection because of being shapeshifters and edgewalkers and who carry witch energy, or who are gender non-normative, or sex workers or activists. It’s a plant that is an ally of people who are challenging power structures and of marginalized people. The plant carries that kind of healing in its cells, in its little chlorophyll, and in the way it grows. Part of it is because of its history, because it’s this historical witch plant, and part of it is its constituents... but honestly, I don’t even know what it is, I mean I don’t try to understand it. That’s part of the way I approach it. I don’t try to understand why these things are happening, and I’m not trying to figure it out scientifically or intellectually. It just makes sense to me. I feel like some of the magic can dissolve when you try to figure out why things are the way they are.

GB: The phrase “it just makes sense” is really appropriate for this kind of context. It makes

sense because you feel it and you smell it and you understand it. It’s a force in the world that makes sense. Even in the most skeptical moments, there’s a really hard empiricism there too, even if it’s not about trying to figure something out logically, it’s right there, having effects in the world. That’s as good as it gets.

DM: Totally.

GB: When I first formulated that question about histories I was thinking geographically about the journeys of plants, and the way that they accompany humans relationally. They become implicated somehow in colonial relationships, but they have a very different type of agency in those relationships. What is the agency of plants?

DM: Well, there are actually a lot of studies being done on plant intelligence. I remember reading something about onion cells; that when they are chopped in half, they reorganize in a way that could be interpreted as making decisions. And mycelium are incredibly intelligent and respond to ecosystemic changes and imbalances. They’re the healers of the forest. And then there’s the whole school of thought that we are the agents of the plants. There are people who actually wonder if we are doing their bidding, by eating and disseminating seed, propagating and caretaking. Certainly when I see people who have mushroom logs and make kombucha in their houses, crazy avid fermenters, I start to wonder whether the amount of microbes they’re eating starts to affect their brains and they are actually under the control of the microbes who are like, “you must make

more kombucha, you must make more sauerkraut, and give it to all your friends.” Maybe there’s this counterculture movement of fermenters that are basically microbial drones. But that’s a whole other conversation.

People tend to send me scientific studies about how plants do crazy things, as if to say, “see, plants are smart.” Of course plants are smart. It’s a given and it makes sense, and I don’t need to see a study about how an onion reorganizes itself. Being in a relationship with plants... I mean it’s totally amazing, when you really think about it, that you can heal from drinking water that has had leaves in it. We know scientifically that things are happening, but you also know that your throat stops hurting or you stop sneezing, or your fever breaks, or you get a fever, or you throw up, or your stomach is soothed.

GB: It’s interesting that the sense of history you’re relating is less about where the plants have been than who they’ve been with. It’s that that builds up the history and the character of the plant and that also informs how people relate to it as medicine. The reason I was thinking about mugwort earlier relates to how you were saying that it doesn’t really want to grow in a garden in nutrient-rich soil. It thrives in disturbed sites, in marginal sites. There aren’t a lot of nutrients, the soil is dry and compacted... and what that means, of course, is that it occupies an ecological niche that a lot of other plants can’t.

When I think about the colonial history of the Americas, ever since Europeans first showed

up and started ripping up soil and changing the lay of the land in abrupt ways, one way of understanding this is as a process of incredible ecological disturbance. And I understand that to include all of the human violence. Plants like mugwort were there to step into the void created by these disturbances. They also remediate just by virtue of being there. They decompose every year and add nutrients to the soil, which then makes it hospitable to other plants that need a more nutrient-rich environment. The demonization of so-called invasive species can only come out of the most superficial understanding of what an ecology is and how it functions, that basically refuses to see it as something that exists in time.

DM: Mugwort or dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) both remediate ecologically, but it’s also like they’re trying to give us their medicine. Those are both really good medicines for people who live in cities, which is where they grow, they are really incredible liver tonics, and bitters, which we really need because we eat so much crap, and fat and sugar, and they help us metabolize those things. And, just in general, people are really stressed out and angry, which is the mark of a hot liver. It seems like plants are responding to land disturbances and also to how they affect people. So it’s really good to notice what plants just pop up right outside your door and in your yard. We tend to think of ourselves as outside of ecology, and we’re not at all.

GB: You talk about healing as a process that happens in time. So when you work with post-op trans people, for instance, you’re not just helping

people to get over surgery but really trying to get to a place of healing from generations of oppression and violence. Particular to trans people is the way that heteronormative violence works to erase their history. It seems like an understanding of the thickness of time is really crucial to doing the work that you do, and understanding time in multiple ways. I relate that to the way that you can't understand an ecology if you don't understand it in time. Time operates on all of these different scales because it's determined by the life cycles of all of these different organisms, plus really old and slow things like rocks.

DM: Yes, having a connection to stories and history is another invisible tool in terms of folk healing. Carrying history in our bodies by remembering where we came from, both blood ancestors who determine part of how we walk on the earth, and where we've been. It's both being in time and out of time. Honoring a trajectory of one's individual history, and community history, land history, and plant history. And then the out of time part is being able to heal in widening circles, so that as you heal, and as you're healing yourselves, you're also healing the land and healing ancestral patterns.

GB: The effect of the healing spreading between people is totally stunted if it's only available to people with money who can pay for consultations and if it happens in private, so that it doesn't get absorbed into kitchens and everyday experiences. It still clings to a kind of exceptionalism, and it is commodified in this way that's pretty embarrassing. But if it's possible to overcome that—and this is something that I see a younger generation of radical

health practitioners being attentive to—then it's really easy to see how healing work spreads between people. But what's more difficult, at least for me, is figuring out how to address histories through healing work. Is it possible to talk about that?

DM: Yes, it is. I too, am really excited about the movement towards community based healing and the integration of healing work in activist circles. I am so into making magic and healing as everyday practices, which means they have to be more affordable and accessible.

But in terms of healing through time, a place to start, which is the place that I start, is with individuals. Part of that is people being willing to carry family stories, and to tell them, that's part of the work of breaking a pattern of silence—both violence and oppression within families, and also cultural phenomena of oppression and violence on a larger scale. It's so clear that some of the wounds we carry are not just our own wounds. In the same way that we can carry wounds that come from our parents or our grandparents, or from our great grandparents, or maybe from the different lands that our ancestors inhabited.

When I work with people, things come to me in images. Somebody can come in and be explicit, "I have depression." And tell me a little bit about their family. Or what I'll see is a really heavy felt, that's really cold. It's a sensation, it's both sensation and image at the same time. So it'll be something cold and damp and felty, covering something. And then when I try to pull on it, I get this sense that it's not just theirs, but it comes from

Native to Eur- asia,



mugwort is most often considered a weed in contemporary North America. Most likely imported by Jesuit clergy as a medicine and pot herb, it was first recorded in the St. Lawrence region of Quebec in the 16th century, and has been naturalized on this continent for at least four hundred years. The first North American herbarium species was collected in Prince Edward County, Ontario, in 1825. It is reputed to have allelopathic properties, meaning it secretes chemicals into the soil that prevent the growth of other plants. It survives chemical and manual control largely thanks to its extensive underground network of rhizomes, which are unaffected by much aboveground activity. Extremely tolerant of low nutrient levels, high acidity and compacted soil, it thrives where other plants can't. Over many seasons, its composted foliage contributes nutrients to the soil, its roots spread and aerate, eventually helping to build an environment hospitable to other plants. It was used as a preservative in the brewing process, before the use of hops became widespread. It is an important bitter in Northern European folk herbalism, one of nine sacred Anglo-Saxon plants, and is used in the traditional Chinese medicinal practice of moxibustion, part of acupuncture protocols. Having accompanied humans through so much history, what does mugwort know about us? How can we learn from it? See it as an agent of social change?

538. *Artemisia vulgaris* L.

Mugwort; *Y.*

also their mother, and then I pull on it more, and then I can see a grandparent. But then when I pull on it more what I see is some really intense world history. Like maybe I see Eastern Europe, or maybe I see somewhere on the coast of West Africa, or maybe I pull further and I see... with people I see who were adopted internationally, what that looks like in terms of relationships with birth parents and birth countries. All of that just has different energies that I can feel and see... we carry all of that.

Then there's work for people to do. Going back into their history, dreaming, or writing, or doing rituals, or eating certain things—daily ways for people to do healing work themselves to free their ancestors, or free the land, and to do healing work around racism and internalized racism. Part of it is acknowledging it and part of it is transforming it. So many people who come to see me have decided to be the person who is not going to continue a pattern of addiction or sexual abuse. We can't underestimate the power of choosing to stop a pattern that's six generations behind us.

Magic is the perfect way to heal it because it doesn't have the bounds of time and space. That's what I mean about honouring and being in history and also being able to be out of time. In a way, it's traveling through time, which sounds so strange, but it's so easy to feel when you're in it. And we can see it, too, when we look at the industrial prison complex, when we look at legacies of oppression of poor people and people of color, and how ancestral some of those wounds are that we're enacting. I would love to be able to work in there. People are doing that. There are people who are doing magical activism work, really trying

to undo huge power structures through magic. I'm thinking, for example, of the Reclaiming community, who ground their activism in magic, building off Starhawk's work. Ritual is incorporated into political actions, like casting circles and chanting around nuclear plants and prisons.

What's more, people in power are using magic themselves. It's scary because for the most part, they're using it really unconsciously, which makes it incredibly potent and insidious. This kind of magic could be called power over, which grows from a place of deep wounds. And that's one huge way that oppression continues—a legacy of unhealed wounds and throwing those wounds on someone else.

GB: Are you saying that what defines magic is specifically the practice of working out of a deep history? Or, in other words, present actions take on magical dimensions because of the relationship that they have to history?

DM: Yes! Part of why ancestral wounds and oppression continue is because people don't look at history as something that they have to take responsibility for. Magic is very much part of a broader history and also a way of inhabiting deep and expansive time, geological time, ecological time. It means breaking out of our temporal trap. That's really important and really validating for people because of this individualistic culture, where all of your wounds or whatever's going on with you are really specific and particular to you, and you need to take care of them in your own private secret way and work them out yourself, and maybe they have something to do with your

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When I work with
people, things come to
me in images.

mother, but that's it! That's about as much of a sense of interdependence as you're allowed.

I think it's also important to not just talk about wounds, but to talk about gifts, ancestral gifts, and having access to ancestral gifts and places

that we visit in dream, in a way, that we can dream into and be able to harvest gifts from, too. History, both what has come before us, and that we're also a part of what comes after us: that's a place of healing, too.

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Gina Badger is an artist and writer working in the expanded field of sculpture and installation. Her favored research methods include listening, walking, eating, and drinking. Currently working between Toronto, Montreal, and various locations south of the 49th parallel, Badger holds an M.S. in Visual Studies from MIT. A collaborator at heart, Gina is a member of the Montreal-based Artivistic Collective, and is currently the editorial director of FUSE Magazine. <http://www.ginabadger.com>

Dori Midnight is community-based healer and educator, weaving traditional folk healing, plant medicine, spiritual counseling, and social justice in her work. Drawing on her rich heritage of Roma Gypsy, Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jew, and First Nations ancestry, Dori comes from a long line of tough ladies who healed people in their kitchens. She believes that healing is an "of the people, for the people" practice and works to keep healing accessible, affordable and full of magic. She teaches magic and folk & community herbalism to kids and adults, creates rituals and ceremonies, and provides intuitive counseling and healing for individuals. Dori maintains a practice and teaches workshops in San Francisco, but as of May 2010 makes her home in the woods of Western Massachusetts. <http://www.dorilandia.com>

Image Credits:

Image 1: Gina Badger, Mongrels (Trashy Plants I), 2011. Digital still. Image courtesy of the artist

Image 2: Gina Badger, Mongrels handout 2011. Image courtesy of the artist.

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ILE DE GORÉE

Zahra Moloo

Keywords: Transformation. Enchantment. Surreal. The ordinary turned extraordinary. Senegal. Streets. Everyday.

Sandy yellow streets, crumbling ruins of old colonial buildings overlooking the Atlantic: the sleepy island of Ile de Gorée, only two kilometres away from the chaos of Dakar, has for a long time played a part in historical imagination. The Maison des esclaves (the House of Slaves) is one of the island's main tourist attraction, where visitors can learn about the horrors of the slave trade, where they are told that millions of slaves were bundled together into small enclosures before being shipped away across the ocean. UNESCO named the island a World Heritage Site, stating on its website that "the various elements of this 'memory island' – fortresses, buildings, streets, squares, etc. – recount, each in its own way, the history of Gorée, which, from the 15th to the 19th century, was the largest slave-trading centre of the African coast." But some historians dispute the importance of the island in transporting slaves to the new world. They argue that other sites have greater historical authenticity and are more accurate testaments to the horrors of the slave trade.

This idea of Gorée as a 'memory island' is curious. Wandering through the House's numerous displays and the streets of Ile de Gorée, many visitors are visibly shaken imagining the conditions in which the slaves were supposedly kept. The island and its House of

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There is nothing particularly remarkable about the scene and the painting itself was inspired only by the desire to depict the kind of life that is found here on this specific street, in this place, a place like any other, and unlike any other.

Slaves have a symbolic and emotional significance, but are they based on mere supposition, on a present re-construction of history that manipulates the past? The re-imagining of history, the imagined spectacle of suffering on the island has become a profitable enterprise, as it is in many parts of the world. What is truly authentic about Gorée when the visit itself is part of a constructed tourist experience?

This painting is also a re-construction, a re-imagining. Not a tragic one of the past, designed to play on emotional memory, but simply of everyday life in Gorée. The sun beats down mercilessly on a Sunday afternoon. The island's inhabitants cover their faces, take a rest in the shade, stroll leisurely down the streets. There is nothing particularly remarkable about the scene and the painting itself was inspired only by the desire to depict the kind of life that is found here on this specific street, in this place, a place like any other, and unlike any other. Colour and light combine to show the streets of Gorée as warm, inviting, and transformed from their original sharp contours; streets imagined by a visitor struck by other enchanting and surreal segments of everyday life in Gorée – enormous pelicans perched on footpaths, cows wandering about on the dusty hills, artists making bottles of coloured sand, an old man creating statues of wood. The magic of Ile de Gorée is as simple as perceiving an ordinary scene in an extraordinary way, transforming the everyday into a sun-washed scene that invites the viewer to walk the same streets, to experience the same enchantment through transformation.

An enchanting present takes the place of a constructed past.

Zahra Moloo is a journalist and painter, currently based in her hometown of Nairobi. Most of her journalistic work and radio documentaries have focused on indigenous communities, mining, and fishing in east and central Africa, for instance in her extensive writing on the legacy of colonialism and resource extraction in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Her work regularly appears on Pambazuka, a newsletter and website on progressive voices from the African continent, and she is also a regular contributor to Amandla radio in Montreal and has written extensively on the legacy of colonialism and resource extraction in the Democratic Republic of Congo. After a six-year hiatus, she resumed painting a few months ago, inspired by fleeting moments of magic in everyday life.



COMMENT SE LIBÉRER DU REGARD? Un ENTRETIEN AVEC RONALD ROSE-ANTOINETTE

Sophie Le-Phat Ho

Brume, Eau, Arbres et Capitalisme, ou comment se créer une vision de sortie

Répondant à l'invitation ou à l'appel de la Relation, nous nous en allions diagrammatiser notre entour, nous révéler à nous autres. Voici ce que nous avons rencontré, retrouvé, pactisé, ce que nos yeux n'ont rien vu, ce que nous avons donné sans le savoir. Un investissement sur la surface boisée, humide de la libération.

De ces photos, d'abord, on ne peut dire avec exactitude d'où elles reviennent, de quel voyage ou séjour, de quelle vitesse elles réchappent. Elles sont pour moi le souvenir d'un Temps, d'un événement qui déterritorialisait trop vite et que j'ai alors voulu courir avant qu'il ne brise toutes mes chances. Aussi, certaines de ces photos sur l'eau, dans le noir, sont à la fois rassurantes et terrifiantes de mon point de vue.

En revanche, ce qui est sûr c'est qu'elles extraient des lignes au-devant de moi, mais ce ne sont évidemment pas des lignes de fixation identitaire, pénitencières, sécuritaires, mais plutôt d'exploration, d'expérimentation. La technique (l'appareil photographique) rentre en jeu, se met à rythmer et à temporaliser par-dessus la vitesse infinie des ténèbres, à abstraire ce paysage, cette territorialité, de la modalité larvaire du chaos. L'espace et le temps s'hétérogénéisent : acte cosmopolitique primordial, aidé d'un vivant technologique fondamentalement athée et qui, quoi qu'on en dise, n'est pas homologable à une prise de possession (exploitation et capture d'âme) ou à une répétition cosmogonique sacralisante (puisque non entièrement tourné vers la région qui le transcende et sans laquelle il perdrait pied). Ici, au contraire, c'est la rupture, la coupure vers l'immanence qui constitue un véritable « acte de foi » ; la carto/photographie a bien quelque chose de néguentropique et de libérateur. Elle est née, créée à partir de cette préhension et de cette

sensation douloureuses, tristes et confuses, que quelque chose va ou est en train de disparaître, qu'un événement annihilateur, destructeur, sinon génocidaire, a lieu à une échelle du vivant technologique que nous ne percevons pas forcément avec les organes dont nous sommes équipés, qu'elle que soit l'échelle sur laquelle cet événement à cours, macro ou micro.

C'est d'abord et avant tout en ces termes que je réfléchis à la magie : délivrant des tragédies destinales de toute spéciation ou spécialisation, contre-effectuant l'emprise des formes de signification dominantes. Acte de désaliénation qui n'est pas sans rappeler le procès de diagrammatisation cartographique évoqué par Guattari. Certaines de ces photos sont des cartes qui ne nous disent pas où aller. Liquider l'évidence selon laquelle il ne s'agirait là que d'éléments communs (un littoral, des arbres, de l'eau, un territoire vierge), alors que c'est précisément le commun qu'il faut transfigurer. C'est sur lui qu'il faut insister, lui duquel il faut sans retard détourner le regard. Je pense alors aux manières de s'allier, de se faire une génialité sans finalité, de trouver dans l'obscurité la plus épaisse une occasion d'expérimentation, de transformation et d'imagination qui nous diffère du sortilège. Comment se défaire, par exemple, d'une certaine idée du moment, de l'instant, de l'instantané qui gangrène à coup sûr les pratiques et les conceptions les plus aveugles du dispositif photographique ? Et puis surtout, comment se libérer des discours captieux du système sorcier capitaliste (Stengers) ? Avec quelles techniques diagrammatiques devons-nous donner à l'occasion d'une conjuration du sort, de tous les sorts qui nous sont jetés ? La véritable magie (opposée

aux actes de capture d'âme et de beauté polysémique) n'apporte pas de réponse toute faite à ce genre de questionnement mais les problématise davantage.

Et l'innocence ? Quelle innocence ? Nous n'avons cesse de pactiser avec les démons, surtout dans nos devenirs imperceptibles. Mais il faut savoir revenir « à temps » de ces rencontres, des chaosmos qui nous relancent sur d'autres lignes de désir pour ne pas avoir à subir la catastrophe ou la dissolution totale auxquelles ils nous invitent. C'est d'ailleurs le risque qu'encourt tout magicien lorsqu'il marche sur ce corps amorphe qu'est celui du virtuel. Diablerie de virtuel ! La photo, tout comme le cinéma, peut nous arracher les yeux « agglomérés circulairement » de la tête, nous créer un sujet acéphale, impersonnaliser tous les devenirs qui y passent. C'est une sorte de manière embryonnaire de voir, de marcher... sans être sûr de l'emplacement de nos organes, joyeusement ignorant d'un certain axe évolutif ou génétique. Retour en force d'un inconscient libéré, machinique, non structurel. Cela nous renvoie à la libération que j'évoquais précédemment. Mais il s'agira toujours d'une libération négociée, pactisée, un rien sale. Rien ne « va de soi » et rien ne s'acquiert sans un don (une ouverture vers l'immanence) quelconque (non chosifiée et non sanctifiée).

Reconnaissons enfin que la technologie photographique est à même de capter des séances de magie, de les illustrer, de les légèrer, mais qu'elle « détient » aussi en elle une sorte de « fonction » détraquée, schizo, qui consiste à préhender des devenirs sur un plan de consistance, à les arracher à la course folle du chaos, à doubler

sa vitesse infinie de déterritorialisation par une contre-déterritorialisation, rythmique, mais tout aussi infinie. Et, comme si un tel droit ne suffisait pas, on ne peut, on le sent, revenir du chaos en étant propre ou indemne.

Voilà ce qu'on peut dire de la puissance démoniaque d'un appareillage qui te met hors de toi-même, hors du Je, hors-Je. Cela ne ressemble plus à rien, ne représente rien : on a affaire qu'à des affects, des pulsions affirmatives. Répétons-le : rien ne « va de soi », rien n'est joué d'avance. Équipe-toi des technologies de libération sémiotique pour construire une nouvelle écologie de la perception. Découvre la polyvocité des images, libère-les, œuvre à la beauté polysémique du monde. À toi alors de crever (ré-inventer) la cécité dont tes yeux te drapent, de percevoir... enfin ! Sinon au-devant, l'événement.

Vision : Brume, Eau, Arbres.

Texte : Ronald Rose-Antoinette

Keywords: Évènement. Machinisme. Appareil. Désir. Désenvoûtement. Capitalisme. Chaos. Rythme. Affinités contre-nature. Démons. Sorcellerie. Guattari. Deleuze. Stengers. Beaudrillard.

À chaque numéro de *No More Potlucks*, l'auteur.e de la page couverture est interviewé.e aux fins de

la publication et une série de ses photos paraissent à l'intérieur du numéro. Je présume que, d'habitude, ce sont des photographes professionnels qui sont présentés.es. Au moment de faire mon choix, le hasard a fait que j'avais récemment vu des photographies qui avaient « quelque chose de magique »...

J'ai rencontré pour la première fois Ronald seulement quelques semaines avant l'entrevue. Nous étions parmi une cinquantaine de participant.es à un événement intitulé *Generating the Impossible*, organisé par le Sense Lab, un réseau international de personnes qui s'intéressent à la relation entre la recherche et la création, dirigé par Erin Manning et Brian Massumi et dont le quartier général se situe à l'Université Concordia. Une majeure partie de l'événement s'est déroulée dans les Laurentides, dans la pourvoirie de Meekos. Ronald étudie la philosophie et le cinéma, à Paris. Je me suis donc dit qu'il aurait sûrement une ou deux petites choses à dire sur les images... Ce qui suit relève plus de l'entretien que de l'entrevue. J'ai simplement voulu qu'on puisse discuter de magie (et de philosophie) ensemble, à partir des images qu'il avait prises à Meekos.

Notre conversation a lieu sur la terrasse ensoleillée d'une cantine antillaise, entourée d'arbres, autour de patties jamaïcains, en plein centre-ville de Montréal. Puisque ce n'est pas une entrevue, Ronald me pose la première question. Il me demande pourquoi j'avais choisi de faire un numéro sur la magie. En amorce, donc, nous débutons en parlant de *La sorcellerie capitaliste*, ouvrage de Philippe Pignarre et Isabelle Stengers. Je lui explique sommairement que, pour moi, *La sorcellerie*



capitaliste est un livre très utile, car il offre une sorte de critique de l'anticapitalisme contre un système avec un grand S mais qui ne veut pas dire grand-chose, qui ne présente aucune prise pour ceelles qui voudrait développer une pratique de l'anticapitalisme... Ainsi, de percevoir le capitalisme comme une « forme d'envoûtement » ou « d'appareil de capture » nous permet de commencer à imaginer et à mettre en pratique une lutte ou une résistance différemment. Car le capitalisme est « plus qu'un système », il travaille constamment sur les gens. Ce n'est pas parce qu'on se considère anticapitaliste que l'on n'est pas capturé par le capitalisme...

Ronald Rose-Antoinette : Oui, bien sûr... Donc en fait, il y a des formes de sémiotisation. Isabelle Stengers parle – elle est très guattarienne – du capitalisme comme « machine de sémiotisation ». C'est une machine qui travaille en permanence, qui ne dort jamais, qui n'a pas de centre bien précis. C'est un capitalisme diffus, qui essaye de s'incarner, qui a besoin du corps – du corpus et du socius, d'ailleurs. Par rapport à la magie, ce serait comme une sorte de machine qui travaillerait... Hmm, je me pose la question...

Quand je pense à magie, je pense à un truc très simple : un tour de magie. Comment faire un tour de magie? Ça demande un magicien, ça demande quelqu'un qui connaît des trucs, des astuces. Il y a du trucage lorsqu'on parle de magie. Ou il y a un trucage qui n'est pas nécessairement visible. Il y a un usage de techniques qui n'est pas à la portée de n'importe qui. Donc, ça demande un certain savoir, une certaine érudition des forces, du pouvoir et des puissances qui sont dans le monde.

Puis, comment réorienter ces puissances-là de manière à créer une sorte d'illusion – de magie, justement. La magie en général nous éblouit, elle nous laisse bouche bée, elle nous sort de l'ordinaire. Il y a quelque chose de fondamentalement attirant dans la magie; on ne sait pas nécessairement quoi, mais c'est ce qui fait que c'est « magique »... Il y a un je-ne-sais-quoi dans la magie qui nous donne à voir ou expérimenter des choses qu'on n'expérimente pas au quotidien.

Sophie Le-Phat Ho : Donc, il y a quelque chose de spectaculaire dans la magie?

RRA : Pas nécessairement de spectaculaire... Justement, comment penser la magie en dehors du spectaculaire? Il y a de la magie dans les choses les plus simples, dans les détails. La magie, ça demande des agencements, des machines qui se rencontrent et qui produisent quelque chose. Il y a peut-être de la magie qui se passe en ce moment et l'on n'en est pas forcément conscients. Il y a de la magie sur plusieurs échelles; tant sur le plan molaire que sur le plan moléculaire.

Je pense que le type de magie dont fait usage un certain capitalisme, c'est un type de magie spectaculaire : on va vous éblouir, on va vous en mettre plein les yeux, on va vous faire miroiter plein de belles choses que vous n'aurez jamais. Il y a tellement de magiciens... Est-ce que tous les magiciens nous font du bien? Qu'est-ce qu'ils nous apportent?

SLPH : Lorsque tu dis « magiciens », tu ne désignes pas nécessairement des personnes?



RRA : Ce ne sont pas forcément des personnes, effectivement. Mais, dans le sens du capitalisme, ça a tendance à s'incarner dans des corps phéno-ménologiquement représentés et représentables.

SLPH : Tu penses à quoi, par exemple? À qui?

RRA : Je ne pense pas nécessairement à quelqu'un ou à une figure particulière. Justement, même si le capitalisme a besoin de cette structuration verticale – c'est-à-dire une sorte d'hypermachine qui agit sur plusieurs niveaux toujours de manière verticale : ça part d'un grand centre névralgique, étatique, ou je ne sais pas quoi, puis ça descend jusque dans le corps familial, le couple... – ça ne s'incarne pas forcément dans une figure bien précise... Le magicien peut être invisible. Il a aussi ce pouvoir-là de ne pas se montrer. Il a cette capacité-là de se mouvoir à une certaine vitesse, de ne pas être totalement fixe. Le magicien joue beaucoup avec les lois.

Donc c'est assez paradoxal parce que, autant on a affaire à une sorte de structure qui aligne des lois, des pouvoirs et des structures bien précises, autant on a affaire à cette même machine-là qui déterritorialise ces mêmes couches de lois et de pouvoirs parce qu'elle a besoin de ça. Elle ne peut pas être fixe. Pour survivre, elle a besoin de nouveaux espaces, de nouveaux temps. Elle se nourrit de nouvelles temporalités.

SLPH : Est-ce la magie est le vecteur qui fait que ça se déterritorialise? Ou alors c'est une des techniques?

RRA : C'est une des techniques qui est employée pour garder cette sorte d'immuabilité.

SLPH : Et lorsque tu parles de « structures », tu ne fais pas nécessairement référence au capitalisme?

RRA : Non, il y a toutes sortes de structures. C'est un peu préfabriqué de dire qu'il n'y a que des structures données. OK, il y a des structures qui sont données, mais il y a aussi des structures qui ne le sont pas. C'est là où l'on peut dire qu'il y a une sorte de magie qui intervient parce qu'il y a de la production. C'est ce qu'on disait tout à l'heure : il y a une production de nouveaux agencements, de nouveaux modes de vie, de nouveaux modes d'expression. On crée de nouveaux codes, de nouvelles structures...

Mais c'est une bonne question : est-ce que la magie demande vraiment un magicien? À quel moment (et si c'est vraiment un « moment ») intervient la magie? À quel moment y a-t-il de la magie? Y a-t-il quelque chose de magique?

SLPH : Peut-être qu'on pourrait aborder les photos que tu as prises comme exemple pour tenter de répondre à cette question?

RRA : C'est marrant parce que je n'ai jamais vraiment abordé mon approche du cinéma ou des images en général de cette manière-là, en me posant la question « est-ce qu'il y a de la magie? Est-ce que c'est magique? » Donc, c'est intéressant pour moi d'essayer d'en parler dans ces termes-là. Déjà, quand j'étais petit, j'aimais la magie, j'étais fasciné, mais il y a toujours quelque



chose dans la vie qui nous fait mettre en doute cette notion de magie... Aujourd'hui, ce n'est pas que je sois habité par une forme de scepticisme, ce n'est pas ça... On vit tellement avec des images, justement... On est tellement entourés d'images et de signes qui nous laissent à penser qu'il n'y a plus de magie dans le monde. Comme si la magie était une chose en voie de disparition. Mais c'est justement là où certaines images ont le pouvoir de nous faire croire... On veut tous être partout et nulle part, on veut tout savoir... Maintenant qu'on est dans cette ère de l'information et qu'on sait davantage ce qui nous constitue, ce qui crée des relations ou pourrait en créer; maintenant qu'on a accès à cette base informationnelle et à ces couloirs de connexions et d'embranchements; maintenant qu'on a accès à ça, je me demande si ça ne contrebalance pas cette foi ou cette croyance qu'il y a toujours de la magie. Parce que la magie implique une certaine foi, même si le mot est un peu fort... Il faut y croire quand même! Mais aujourd'hui, on est tellement...

SLPH : Non-croyants?

RRA : Oui. On est tellement détachés d'une certaine immanence. Je pense à ce que disent Deleuze et Guattari (je crois que c'est dans Mille plateaux), quand ils parlent de renouer un lien ou de retrouver la foi en l'immanence. Je trouve que c'est très important. Quand ils parlent de foi en l'immanence, ils ne parlent pas de foi avec quelque chose de transcendantal (sans forcément souligner une division entre le transcendantal et l'immanence). Non, c'est justement rétablir ce lien, retrouver cette connexion avec l'immanence. Ce que j'aime beaucoup, c'est qu'ils en parlent en

termes de foi. C'est comme si on ne voulait plus croire en l'opérativité magique de l'immanence. Il y a simplement des forces, terrestres, telluriques, géologiques, cosmiques. On les a tellement rationalisées, on est tellement dans un processus de rationalisation à tout va, qu'on rase ce plan ou cette surface d'immanence.

Tu te rappelles quand on lisait le texte de Guattari sur les trois écologies et l'on se demandait ce que voulait dire « aspérité »? Je pense sincèrement que l'aspérité, c'est ça : retrouver une certaine rugosité surfacique et volumique qu'on dénie de plus en plus. On veut tout rendre lisse. On veut que tout soit bien poli. Si tu veux, il y a un phénomène d'arasement et d'accélération qui est très symptomatique aujourd'hui. On veut diminuer toutes les singularités. C'est vraiment un phénomène de diminution des singularités. Et donc, tout le machinisme sémiotique-capitaliste a pour vocation justement de rendre plus lisse la surface ou la face du monde. Guattari parle beaucoup du visage et de la « visagéité » et je trouve que c'est un bon point d'entrée pour parler de ça, de cette espèce de cosmétisation du visage. Mais le visage, ce n'est pas juste le visage du corps humain car, forcément, lorsqu'il parle du visage, c'est celui d'un corps sans organes. Donc, la table, c'est un visage. C'est une surface émettrice de signes, qui renvoie quelque chose, qui a une singularité, qui a une texture, qui a une qualité. Un arbre, c'est un visage. Mais, le grand machinisme mondial intégré travaille sur cette base de gommage des aspérités du visage et des surfaces. Donc, pour revenir à ce qu'on disait, cette foi en l'Immanence qu'on a tendance à perdre, c'est peut-être à cause de ce travail de polissage et de cosmétisation. Et



il y a des politiques très cosmétiques, il y a des formations de pouvoir qui excellent là-dedans.

Donc, il y a de la magie déjà. Il y a de la magie dans l'immanence, mais on ne sait peut-être plus où la voir, où regarder. On ne sait peut-être même plus comment voir, juste comment voir. Parce qu'on est tellement entraînés à voir avec nos deux yeux. Du coup, on en vient à manquer cette aspérité immanente, diversité écosystémique, ou je ne sais comment dire... Donc, ça demande, si tu veux, un travail personnel, sur soi-même... Je ne devrais pas le dire comme ça, c'est forcément un travail collectif. Ce que Simondon a appelé le « transindividuel ». Il dit que l'individuel n'est rien sans le transindividuel. Et je pense que c'est au transindividuel d'expérimenter ou de trouver les techniques qui lui permettront de voir et de sentir à nouveau ce qu'il y a de magique, mais, simplement, en lui et autour de lui, dans son entour. De voir ce qu'il y a de merveilleux (rires)... Mais ce qu'il y a de merveilleux au sens de potentiel, au sens de virtuel. Ce qui pourrait permettre au transindividuel de s'individualiser, de grandir, de se libérer un peu plus à chaque fois.

SLPH : Se libérer de quoi?

RRA : Se libérer d'une certaine gravité, d'une certaine rationalisation constante. Je ne dis pas que rationaliser, ce n'est pas bien... Ça demande un dosage des techniques. Mais rationaliser tout, ça crée des robots. Si on n'est plus capables de se laisser émerveiller par la diversité écosystémique, c'est un peu effrayant.

Donc, ça demande vraiment un travail sur la perception et la sensation. Parce qu'on nous construit... C'est là que les appareils de captures capitalistiques travaillent à merveille : ils nous construisent au quotidien, en permanence, seconde après seconde, un corps phénoménologiquement vécu, un corps avec des organes. On nous crée une organicité perceptive. Il n'y a plus vraiment de place pour une perception mouvante, changeante, connective et rhizomatique. Je pense que c'est très important. Et c'est là où je crois que l'art, par exemple, a quelque chose à jouer à ce niveau-là : la perception comme technique de connexion et d'embranchement.

Dans ma pratique, quand je réfléchis sur le cinéma, ce qui m'intéresse vraiment chez un artiste ou un cinéaste, qu'il travaille avec les sons ou les images, peu importe, c'est le travail diagrammatique sur la perception comme technique de connexion. C'est à ce moment-là que ça m'intéresse : lorsqu'on sent ou on perçoit qu'il y a vraiment une approche connective. Je pensais au diagramme car je travaille beaucoup là-dessus en ce moment... C'est fou comment ça prend du temps pour comprendre ce qu'est un diagramme! Une des façons d'aborder le diagramme, une des portes d'entrée, c'est la création d'une nouvelle perception. Donc, ça demande qu'il n'y ait pas déjà un corps prédéfini, déjà tout fait. Ça nous rappelle sans arrêt qu'on ne sait pas vraiment – un peu comme dirait Spinoza – ce que peut un corps. On ne sait jamais ce qu'un corps peut faire.

Il y a plusieurs beaux films qui nous montrent qu'il y a tellement de potentialités, qu'il y a un réservoir de forces inépuisable qui demande à



être exploitées. Je pense à des cinéastes comme Pierre Denis, Gus van Sant aussi... Il y a aussi des cinéastes moins connus, mais pour citer des cinéastes connus... On voit chez ces cinéastes-là qu'il y a toujours un effort pour nous montrer qu'il y a des temporalités nouvelles qui demandent à être perçues. Il y a des forces – pas forcément des formes, mais des forces – qui demandent à être exploitées, à être vécues, à être senties.

SLPH : Et le cinéma le représente ça?

RRA : Hmm, je ne suis pas sûre que le terme représentation soit le bon...

SLPH : Il le met en action, il fait avoir lieu?

RRA : Oui, il fait avoir lieu. On peut dire : il donne naissance. C'est d'ailleurs comme ça que Deleuze, dans Logique de la sensation, décrit le diagramme. Il dit que le diagramme, c'est comme les sensations qu'on ressent en naissant. Intéressant..!

SLPH : OK. (rires)

RRA : Mais, quand on naît, ce sont des sensations de confusion. Ce ne sont pas des sensations qu'on peut décrire ou retranscrire. C'est vraiment des sensations confuses. Mais on essaie d'échapper au chaos... C'est une venue en présence, au monde. Mais pour se présenter au monde, pour répondre à l'appel d'une présence au monde, il faut échapper, à quelque part, au chaos d'où l'on vient, de cette vitesse infinie (parce que c'est ça, le chaos, c'est la vitesse infinie). Il faut qu'on trouve une sortie. Et c'est là que ça devient intéressant de parler du rythme. Le rythme vient temporaliser ce

chaos à vitesse infinie. C'est ça, temporaliser, finalement, c'est simple. Enfin, c'est « simple » (rires)... Temporaliser, c'est... Je ne dirais pas le terme « exister »... C'est devenir. C'est plus qu'être. C'est devenir dans le monde, tout en échappant le mieux qu'on peut au chaos. Je ne dis pas non plus que le chaos est quelque chose dont on peut se débarrasser toute sa vie. On a toujours besoin de lâcher prise quelque part... C'est là où l'on sent, chez certains artistes, qu'il y a une sorte de perte de contrôle, qu'on sort de la toute rationalisation qui, elle, est vraiment une forme de temporalisation basée sur le surcodage... Tac, tac, tac... c'est une cadence. Là, on n'est plus vraiment dans le rythme, on est dans la cadence, dans le tempo. C'est une forme de temporalisation « tempo » (rires).

SLPH : C'est une tempo-ralisation?! (rires)

RRA: De la manière que je regarde le cinéma et les images, je porte beaucoup mon attention sur ces moments de lâcher prise, de pertes de contrôle non nécessairement voulues, où l'on sent qu'il y a le chaos en arrière-plan... Et l'on sent que l'artiste ne veut pas laisser toute son oeuvre se fondre là-dedans, donc l'artiste va rythmer pour ne pas sombrer dans le chaos infini. Et c'est à ce moment-là que c'est très intéressant. Il y a des cinéastes qui font ça très bien, qui n'ont pas de destination ou de trajectoire très précise. Ils n'ont pas peur justement de perdre un peu le contrôle, sans forcément tomber dans le chaos total. C'est vraiment le rapport des deux : rythme/chaos. Chaosmosis. Je pense que le diagramme est un concept très intéressant pour voir les films et les images autrement. Et nous permettre de développer une

nouvelle vision. Je ne dirais pas un nouveau regard parce qu'il y a encore trop cette connotation au globe oculaire... Mais les magiciens ou les shamans ont des visions. Je lis des textes sur le chamanisme en ce moment pour ma thèse... Le shaman voit des choses que l'assemblée ne voit pas forcément. On ne sait pas trop ce qu'il voit (rires), mais il voit des choses, il voit des forces, il est en connexion avec quelque chose. Je pense qu'il y a un genre de chamanisme démoniaque en jeu dans certains films ou dans certains diagrammes où l'on se dit que l'artiste devait être possédé : il a créé des lignes, il a trouvé des points de fuite, il a vu des choses, ou l'on voit nous-mêmes des choses... Ces choses-là sont des singularités. Ce ne sont pas des idées, des essences. On voit justement ces aspérités-là.

C'est comme un cinéaste thaïlandais, Apichatpong Weerasethakul, celui qui a réalisé *Tropical Malady*. Je trouve que c'est un artiste à suivre. Je me demande s'il en est conscient, mais il donne le temps ou il crée du temps pour vraiment voir des choses. Je trouve que peu de cinéastes aujourd'hui ont à coeur de nous faire voir des choses. Aujourd'hui, les gens produisent ou reproduisent des images, mais ce n'est pas forcément pour nous faire voir. C'est cette idée de divertissement oculaire qui prime. Ce n'est pas se libérer du regard. Justement : comment se libérer du regard? Quelles sont les techniques qui peuvent nous libérer du regard?

Je trouve qu'il y a tellement de cinéastes qui réfléchissent sur ces questions-là, mais Weerasethakul, par exemple, ne cherche pas à jouer sur la vitesse d'érosion ou d'arasement des singularités. Lui, arrive avec sa caméra et ses techniques – et avec

sa vision surtout – et il crée du temps, il essaye de capter... C'est là la subtilité, il capte, mais il ne capture pas quelque chose. Ce n'est pas quelqu'un qui va capturer des forces ou des formes. On voit assez vite, quand on expérimente son oeuvre, qu'il n'est pas obsédé par des formes. Et, surtout, pas par des formes humaines. C'est ça que je trouve intéressant. Il y a des formes, des forces, du signifiant, de l'asignifiant, du codage, du surcodage, il y a plein de choses. Il n'est pas non plus dans un trip « on ne va filmer que des forces invisibles ». Non, il vit avec son monde, avec ce qui est présent, mais il crée du temps, il crée de l'espace pour nous, pour lui et surtout pour ses personnages, pour respirer, pour vivre, pour trouver de nouveaux couloirs d'air. Ne pas suivre un chemin bien précis... Il n'y a pas d'autoroutes. C'est ce que j'aime. Tous ses gestes, tous ses plans, tous ses mouvements de caméra sont des flux, des mouvements d'individuation, des mouvements de déterritorialisation permanents.

SLPH : Donc penses-tu mettre en pratique quelque chose de similaire dans ta pratique (ou lorsque tu prends des photos)?

RRA : Bien, j'aimerais beaucoup... Pour revenir aux photos que tu as vues et que tu trouvais intéressantes, c'est bizarre parce que je n'ai pas voulu être dans la mise en scène. Je n'ai pas cherché à... tu vois ce que je veux dire? Il n'y a pas de mise en scène pour moi. C'était totalement, comme ça, au hasard... Je me suis dit « tiens, je vais prendre des photos » (rires).

C'est marrant, en fait, ça rejoint exactement ce que je disais tantôt. J'ai pris ces photos-là lorsqu'on

était sur le lac et il faisait noir. Et puis, en fait, j'ai enclenché le flash pour essayer de savoir où je me trouvais. Pour qu'il y ait une sorte de réfraction sur quelque chose. Pour me dire « ah tiens, on est là », « il y a de la terre devant nous » ou « il y a des gens devant nous », parce qu'on ne voyait absolument rien. C'est ça, temporaliser. C'est exactement ça. On se met à produire des signes pour savoir où l'on est, ce qui se passe. On ne veut pas se noyer dans le chaos. Je ne voulais pas me noyer dans le chaos alors j'ai mis le flash. Tout d'un coup, sans m'en rendre compte, ça a pris ces photos-là... Je ne m'étais même pas rendu compte qu'on était dans la brume. Sur l'une des photos, on voit plus ou moins nettement qu'il y a cette évaporation au-dessus de l'eau et on voit les arbres en arrière-plan (rires)... J'ai voulu créer une sorte de terre. En prenant ces photos, j'ai créé un visage ou un paysage pour me dire « OK, si jamais il y a un souci, c'est par là que je dois aller ».

Mais il n'y avait pas de mise en scène, quoi. Dans ma « pratique », quand je prends des photos, quand j'écris, quand je dessine, quand je fais un peu de peinture (ça m'arrive), je ne suis pas du tout intéressé par tout ce qui est mettre en scène ou représenter. Je ne suis pas du tout dans la représentation parce que je trouve que, politiquement parlant – et là quand je parle de politique, ce n'est pas au sens de formation de pouvoir, mais la politique au sens de potentiel –, je suis beaucoup plus intéressé par la création et le développement de plates-formes d'expérimentation : de créer, d'inventer ou d'utiliser des techniques de connexion qui permettent tout simplement de vivre. Après, il y a toujours ce côté de moi qui prends des photos en touriste, comme tout le monde...

Mais au départ, ce que je voulais en prenant un appareil photo, le but (si c'est un but, je ne sais pas mais) un peu vague, c'était justement de capter quelque chose que je ne verrais pas forcément à l'oeil nu...

SLPH : Te libérer du regard?

RRA : Voilà, me libérer du regard... Mais, bon, ça demande une prise de vue, un angle. Il y a toujours un choix quand on crée quelque chose. On ne crée pas à l'aveugle...

SLPH : Mais, justement, te rappelles-tu, lorsque tu as pris ta première photo pour pouvoir te situer, où tu avais dirigé ta caméra et pourquoi?

RRA : Non, mais j'imagine que c'est ce qu'on appelle la proprioception ou je ne sais quoi... On a comme un sens (assez vague d'ailleurs) de l'orientation en nous. Même dans le noir ou en fermant les yeux, on sent qu'il y a quelque chose, que le danger est par là... C'est parce qu'il y a des signes, des sons, un souffle, une émanation thermique. C'est toujours une question énergétique. Ce sont des indices qui te font dire « je me sentirais peut-être mieux par ici que par là »... Mais on n'est pas orienté, ce n'est pas une véritable orientation, c'est très vague. À un moment donné, il y a une prise de décision : « OK, par ici et pas par là ». Et ça, on le fait quasiment tout le temps. C'est comme lorsqu'on monte dans un métro, on va s'asseoir à tel endroit plutôt qu'un autre, mais sans forcément faire attention à la personne qui est assise à côté de nous. C'est juste une question de qualité. On recherche toujours une qualité sensorielle. À quelque part, c'est très intuitif. On

se dit qu'on se sentirait mieux par là. Mais ce n'est pas forcément par rapport à une forme, et surtout pas à une forme humaine.

J'observe beaucoup les gens dans le métro et plusieurs personnes ont tendance à baser leur décision sur une forme. « Ah tiens, je ne vais pas m'asseoir à côté de ce monsieur-là parce qu'il a l'air de ne pas sentir bon ». C'est basé sur un jugement, en fait. Mais on le fait tous... Mais il y a des moments où je rentre dans un métro et, parce que je suis très timide, je baisse la tête, je regarde le sol et je vais m'asseoir à cette place et pas une autre parce qu'il y a... quelque chose. Il y a une énergie thermique qui fait qu'il y a une sorte d'attraction, de polarisation... Et là, OK, c'est bon.

SLPH : Ça me fait penser aux arts martiaux... Les arts martiaux dans le métro! (rires)

RRA : (rires) Et ça, c'est de la vision, en fait. C'est là où on se met à créer une vision qui n'est pas basée sur des formes. Je veux dire, il n'y a rien de mal à voir des formes. Dieu merci, on voit des formes parce que, sinon, on se prendrait des autobus et des piétons toute la journée. Là où il y a vraiment du potentiel pour créer des choses – c'est comme ça que je comprends la création –, c'est quand on crée cette vision qui n'est plus du tout basée sur des formes. On n'est plus obsédé par des formes. Ça m'énerve, les gens qui sont obsédés avec la représentation de formes ou la pseudo-invention de formes, parce que...

SLPH : Ce n'est pas intéressant?

RRA : Non, parce que ça ne nous libère pas d'un corps organisé. Le fameux corps sans organes

deleuzo-guattarien, ce n'est pas un corps qui n'a pas d'organes, c'est un corps qui n'est pas organisé. C'est ça la différence. C'est un appel à l'invention, à la création d'un corps non organisé, qui n'est pas obsédé, qui n'a pas de fonctions sensori-motrices. Marcher sur deux pieds, un corps vertical, la tête, les pieds, comme ça, non... Il y a tellement de façons de se mouvoir, d'échapper à des catastrophes, à des dangers, à des désastres. On crée tous du rythme pour échapper à des catastrophes qui nous « menacent » en permanence. Après, il y a tellement de façons de créer du rythme. Marcher, courir... Ce n'est pas forcément en tenant pour acquis le corps organisé – qui est un corps bipède, humain. Je pense que lorsque Deleuze et Guattari parlent du devenir-animal ou du devenir-femme – tous ces devenirs monstrueux dont ils parlent – ne sont pas justement devenir-monstre « arrh! », quelque chose de hideux. Le devenir-monstre, c'est devenir plus que l'organisation. De la transcender et d'échapper à tellement de catastrophes. Là aussi, les catastrophes ne sont pas forcément spectaculaires ou quelque chose qui va passer à la télévision. Il y a tellement de catastrophes dont on n'est même pas conscients... On fait tous ça, en fait.

SLPH : Éviter des catastrophes?

RRA : Oui. Le mot « catastrophe » est peut-être un peu fort, et surtout qu'il a tellement été galvaudé, réapproprié, par une certaine faction écologiste ou pseudo-écologiste qui nous parle de catastrophes environnementales... Mais la catastrophe n'est pas forcément une catastrophe planétaire ou globale. Il y a tellement de catastrophes dans cet arbre... Il y a tellement de catastrophes dans ce

verre d'eau... Il y a des catastrophes qu'on ne voit pas, en fait. Mais on peut apprendre à les voir en développant des techniques de perception. L'art a quelque chose à jouer là-dedans parce qu'on a cette espèce de corps organisé qui nous colle à la peau, ce vêtement qu'on nous demande de

porter et qui devient lourd. L'art peut nous aider à déchirer peu à peu cette vieille peau (rires), à nous défaire de ce côté organisé du corps... Parce que le cinéma emploie des techniques que le corps phénoménologique n'a pas forcément. Avec le cinéma, on peut voir des choses.

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Sophie Le-Phat Ho is a researcher and cultural organiser from Montreal, who recently started wandering into information and archival studies. After completing her studies in Environment and Social Studies of Medicine at McGill University, she earned an MA in Anthropology of Health and the Body in the 21C at Goldsmiths College (University of London). She has worked as Coordinator of the DOCAM Research Alliance (Documentation and Conservation of the Media Arts Heritage) at the Daniel Langlois Foundation for Art, Science, and Technology; as Project Officer at the Canada Council for the Arts; as Programming Coordinator at feminist media art centre Studio XX and Editor-in-Chief of .dpi. She was one of the co-curators of UpgradeMTL (Montréal) on politics, culture and technology, as part of the Upgrade! International network, and has been invited to co-curate events by artist-run-centres like Skol and DARE-DARE. Her collaborative writings have been published in periodicals such as Vague Terrain, esse arts + opinions, and Inter art actuel. As the co-founder of Artivistic (artivistic.org), she works at the intersection of art, science and activism. Sophie also likes to eat, dance, climb, crack ice, record sounds and take pictures of unfinished buildings.

Ronald Rose-Antoinette est né à Fort-de-France (Martinique) en 1984. Titulaire d'une licence et d'une maîtrise en Etudes Cinématographiques obtenues à l'Université Concordia à Montréal (Canada), il conduit aujourd'hui, dans le cadre de son doctorat en philosophie à Paris VIII, une réflexion sur ce que pourrait bien produire une politique et une éthologie des images cinématographiques. Ses recherches se tournent principalement vers les notions de diagramme, d'événement, de technique, d'expérimentation et de relation.

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AUDIO:

<http://nomorepotlucks.org/article/magie-no17/magic-strategy-and-capitalism-interview-aladin>

MAGIC, STRATEGY AND CAPITALISM: AN INTERVIEW WITH ALADIN

Anja Kanngieser & Leila

Keywords: Magic. Strategy. Art. Capitalism. Economy. Transversality.

A common observation over the past few decades has been the rise of labour based on affect and creativity, our capacities to speak, emote and empathise. For philosophers and labour theorists, this trend is tied to an emphasis on the production of social relations and networks. The creative or affective labour paradigm is perhaps most strikingly clear in the worlds of art and business, worlds in which imagination and innovation reign, and the traversal of borders and disciplines is marketed as flexibility and independence. aladin walks through these worlds. A magician, artist, entrepreneur, banker, consultant, community worker and alchemist, he crosses and brings together multiple identities and high profile institutions. He is a creative worker par excellence, an example of the successful subject of contemporary capitalism.

This combination of magic, strategy and art of course throws into question the role and meaning of magic today. aladin offers a more complex narrative than what might be commonly expected. We might ask the question: what happens to magic once it is embedded in the languages of business and industry? Traditionally magic has been used to entertain, to beguile its audience, but also to trick and to hide. Magic, when set into the circuitry of the economy, is a chimera. It is comprised of so many different components, and is put to use in so many different contexts, that one hardly knows where it begins and ends. There is a beauty in this practice, as well as a danger. The radical potential of magic lies precisely in its ability to evade capture. In this sense, magic might be seen as a method of flight, both away from one state and toward another. At the same time, magic's

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mutability is a symptom of the way that languages, ideas, practices and relationships are put into use for capital, exoticised and fetishised as novel others with high surplus value.

For aladin, a man whose external biography is unashamedly comprised of secondary sources and rumours, magic is one means to achieve what he desires, which is to make a change. In this sense magic retains some of its old function: to open ways of being and seeing the world up to chance and to new perspectives. Perhaps the magic that aladin invokes is nothing less than fitting for the contexts in which he moves, holding open the tension between aesthetics and economics.

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aladin's command of multiple practices challenges established convention. He has a trans-disciplinary academic and consultancy background in strategic thinking, leaving the London School of Economics to make critical strategic contributions to global corporations, governments and NGOs on their transactions at all levels of civil society. In 2011, strategic counsel to: social enterprise and contemporary arts experiment Fogo Island Arts Corporation in its regeneration of local civic economy; trans Arab parallel initiative 'The Changing Room Project: Reflections on Arab Praxis and Process' during Venice Biennale; new British communications practice Borkkowski. Do. aladin is a prime author of the world's first integrated strategic plan for the culture, media, sport, arts, heritage and tourism of a capital city - that for London 2000-4. Earlier, he led community development work on housing estates in Southwark, London and Montpellier, France - making lasting contributions to local regeneration. He is also an award-winning interdisciplinary artist. www.aladin.me

Anja Kanngieser is a cultural geographer who works with labour self-organisation, migration, collaborative practices, radio and the voice. She collaborates on DIY/ DIT political radio projects, such as Dissident Island and Catalyst Radio, in Australia and the UK. <http://transversalgeographies.org/>

Leila spends a lot of time organising in the context of independent, radical, non-hierarchical, DIY media and tech collectives, and has a particular interest and affinity with radio as a method of communication. Other interests include housing rights, free spaces and food politics. www.dissidentisland.org

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