END OF RADIO*: AN EXPERIMENT OF CULTURAL REPRODUCTION ABOUT THE INHERENT POWERS OF TECHNOLOGY, AUTONOMY, AND CREATIVITY*

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Abstract

End of Radio is an ephemeral webradio consisting of over 48 hours of programming split across more than forty segments. Ranging from original interviews to ambient music and experimental audio narratives, the content has been curated and created as part of a broader reflection on the structuring power of digital technology and its relationship with capitalism, surveillance, and fascism. *End of Radio* is also a playful, creative experiment in cultural reproduction that nods to anarchist, post-Marxist, and autonomist methodologies, as well as engages with recurrent themes in social justice studies. *End of Radio* can be listened to at https://end-of-radio.kuzyn.info.

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Merci to the Anishinaabeg ᐊᓂ ᔑᓈᐯ people who have looked over and taken care of this place where I came to study. May the coercive and extractive treaties be one day exposed as the shameful fraud they always were. May the models of intimate governance that have sprouted here before sprout again. May Indigenous people in Canada and elsewhere get their dues.

Thanks to the people I talked to for this project: Conan, Jess, Art, Markus, and Alessandra. I cannot thank you enough for making time and participate in my experiment, and for sharing your insights with me. My friends who participated in other recordings: Sadie, Em, Katerina. My friends who participated in my life: Mathieu, Louis, Jean-Marc, Hugo, Himel, Robin, Louka, Ksenia, Cosmo, Conan and Jess (again), for lending me support and laughter, even though we cannot see each other as much as I'd like to. My family who has encouraged me without ever really understanding what is it I do or what is it I study. And finally, thanks to my biggest cheerleader, my turkey, Kate.

Memo to the partners
I'm changing all the locks
I'm pissing on your modems
I'm shredding all the stocks
Choose a color for your ceiling
I'm waiting for the bottom to drop

Fugazi, Oct 16 2001, "Oh"[1]

1. Getting in Where I Fit In

My research at Lakehead has remained cross-eyed on two very blurry, hard-to-define concepts for the past two years. The first is social justice—ways in which we understand and frame and dismantle social inequities and biases. The second has been technology, which is an even more vague and sprawling subject.[2] This project appeared out of this, organically at first, but more intentionally after. It became a warehouse of sorts, a 60-foot-high warehouse filled with ideas, experimentations, connections, questions, and mistakes. *End of Radio* is as much about radio as it is about just doing something, anything, that exists in the world and reflects some of its ideas back. *End of Radio* is the process of finding where I fit in. There are two initiatives that have strongly inspired this project. Writing about them is a good way to understand where *End of Radio* comes from, and the intentions animating my process.

For the last 80 years, the Highlander Research and Education Center has been a resource for popular education and grassroots activism in Appalachia. It has helped mobilize coal miners into unions, supported civil rights initiatives in the South, and was instrumental in the creation of the Student

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1   This song, off Fugazi's last album, was written during and is about the bursting of the dot-com bubble. Chatting with the audience during a live performance in 2001, Guy Picciotto remarks that the "economy as been in a tailspin" ever since NPR's "Money Talk" began playing a Fugazi's riff as their intro music without the band's permission. Introducing this song, Picciotto wishfully quips "Let's hope they play a few more of our songs on the radio". Fugazi, *'Oh'—Live at the Ogden Theatre*.

2   While this project does not aim to settle this term, I am tempted to use a working definition from Langdon Winner where technology stands for all forms of "modern practical artifices," which are big and small "systems of hardware" produced through craft or skills. (I would also include the software programs and algorithms that run on those systems.) Winner, "Do Artifacts Have Politics?," 123.

Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in the 1960s.[3] Rosa Parks attended workshops on direct action at the Highlander Center before the Montgomery bus boycott. The center is now running online courses on the rise of fascism and fascistic groups in the United States. Speaking on a panel about democracy, fascism and queering at the "Creating Change 2024" conference, Ash-Lee Woodard Henderson, co-director of the Highlander Center, had one key piece of advice: get in where you fit it.[4]

I learned about the Highlander Center through a mutual aid initiative in Alabama, the Automotive Free Clinic (AFC), started by Zac Hanson. After getting a PhD from Berkley studying social organization, and promptly burning out from academia, Hanson worked full-time as a certified car technician. Eventually, he formed the AFC to offer free and at-cost car services to anyone around Birmingham. It was a way for him to reclaim his identity as a "redneck" in the classic sense of the communist-sympathizing, union organizing, mine workers of West Virginia. Considering the inequities engineered into the design of transportation in Alabama, overwhelmingly designed to hinder the mobility of poor Black communities, felt that his technical know-how as a car mechanic could materially impact his community. Much more than his academic work. Fixing cars made sure that a single mother could drive to work reliably, or that an elderly man could visit his sister. Answering Woodard Henderson's call, Hanson got in where he fits in: as a white redneck mechanic in Alabama. There is also something else radiating from that. The AFC is what Hanson calls a "fascist deprogramming" initiative, where toxic masculinity and conservative opinions so prevalent in the US South are called in rather than called out. Robin Kaiser-Schatzlein, writing about the clinic for the socialist-feminist LUX magazine, explains that:

> Because of the culture of Alabama, the project is not explicit about its leftist politics and doesn't do much in the way of conventional political organizing, allowing it to engage with and retain volunteers from a wide spectrum of ideologies, including unrepentant Trump supporters. But, quietly, for some of its volunteers, the AFC is a chance to turn theory into reality. When people

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3   For a documentary about the Highlander Centre, see Lucy Massie Phenix and Veronica Selver' 1985 documentary, *You Got to Move*.
4   *Democracy, Fascism and Queering the Vote - Creating Change Conference 2024*, 23:25.

ask Hanson about his communist ideas, he just points to the shop. "We're living communism," he says with a shrug.[5]

Hanson got in where he fit in by combining his trajectory, background, and interest in the AFC. Getting in where I fit in is the essence of this project.[6] It means having one foot in social justice and one foot in technology. It means showing up with my whole self. Just like Woodard Henderson, I see the rise of intolerance around me, in friends and family, and feel the urge to imagine new ways to engage people and connect with them; just like Hanson and the AFC I see how valuable and disruptive it can be to divert specialized technical knowledge. For me, it is about bringing more social justice into technology, rather than bringing more technology into social justice. Technology is not a silver bullet, and it is not inherently fair; As surveillance scholar Safyia Noble says, when it comes to tackling issues around us, "An app will not save us. We will not sort out social inequality lying in bed staring at smartphones."[7]

1.1 What is the *End of Radio*

End of Radio is a creative intervention or more specifically, a project of cultural reproduction, that takes the form of an ephemeral webradio. The webradio's program is a collage of interviews, lectures, music, and narrative experimentations.[8] I imagine *End of Radio* as a flour mill for ideas, grinding coarse content into some kind of flour, by harnessing the power of a small stream—a webradio. The end result is something that I could not figure out how to write. It appeared in this form for reasons that I have either forgotten or are not important. The decision to keep my project out of a research-based track is relevant to my positionality and potential. I do not come from a family of academics and it is important for me to connect with others who also do not come from one. Like my

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5   Kaiser-Schatzlein, "Where the Sidewalk Ends."
6   It also means avoiding to trying to fit in against my nature. As country singer Aaron Tippin phrase it: "If you trim yourself to fit the world, there won't be nothing left / Just a little here, and a little there, and you won't know yourself / You'll be a pile of shavings when they put you in your grave / If you trim yourself to fit the world, you'll whittle yourself away." Incidentally, Tippin, whose nicknamed is the "Hillbilly Hercules", is also the author of the vaguely anti-academic blue collar anthem "Working Man's Ph. D."— "If you want a cram course in reality, you get yourself a working man's P-H-D". Tippin, *Trim Yourself to Fit the World*; Tippin, *Working Man's Ph.D.*
7   Noble, *Algorithms of Oppression*, 165.
8   *End of Radio* can be listened to at https://end-of-radio.kuzyn.info

father, I am a Capricorn. This requires me to constantly do (or think about) hard and tedious work. My bane is idleness. I thrive for rigor, order even. But I am also my mother's son, which means that I cook without recipes, that I see shades in color, that I write poems and self-destruct in more ways than one. I wanted to do something complicated and creative for all these reasons, halfway between rigorous and personal. I also wanted something that spoke to me, for which I am the audience.

While my project has less grit than Woodard Henderson's call and less utility than the AFC, it is in dialogue with both in its search for novel ways to engage and politicize people, and how technology fits in. A difference is that my project is a personal and creative endeavor. Perhaps confusingly, the webradio component was not imagined with an audience in mind. It was imagined as a germination process that is part of the project itself. What I mean is that the people that I interviewed and shared this project with, or the sources that inspired me, are both the project's co-creators and audience. I am happy if the webradio finds new ears but it was not my priority: the process is the project. Ultimately I wanted to engage myself in discussions and research on technology and social justice while working towards a playful and creative result.

Out of all the segments that are part of *End of Radio*, the five interviews I conducted are the keystone of the project. As a way to ease into these interviews, I wanted a pretext, a creative tension which could backdrop our discussions and allow me to speak of technology in a non-abstract way. This is why I came up with a playful question: is radio dead?

The idea of talking about radio (and creating a webradio) feels so dated, yet, it also organically brings up ideas about how modern technologies segment our lives and experiences, and about the possible resurgence of old technologies. Regarding the question itself—is radio dead—I felt compelled to propose my own contradictory answer: radio is both completely dead and dangerously alive! What I mean is that human-to-human broadcast radio has often been labeled obsolete, yet, radio transmissions have become the substrate on which virtually all machine-to-machine interactions take place.

Furthermore, broadcasting at large has also been re-invested and re-imagined by individuals in the margins—e.g. hackers, podcasters, webradio collectives, CB and ham radio hobbyists. Since the heydays of kitchen table radios are long gone, it would be intuitive to think of radio as the medium of the past. However, by way of 5G and wifi transmissions, passive antennas such as RFID tags, and new broadcasting modalities, it is actually the medium of the future.

1.2 Probing the Structures of Technology

While the result of my project reflects on the relevance of radio in this day and age, the theme of my research is much broader. In many ways, the decision to focus on radio is both important and irrelevant. Important because it echoes older activist traditions of organizing and the power of amplifying ideas from the margins. Irrelevant because in this project, radio is simply a fitting and natural carrier for discussing the concept of technology in general. In other words, my project is not *about* radio even though it takes the *form* of a webradio.

The research grounding this project is divided into three parts, two of which act as a dialectic literature review. The first component of this review is focused on the symptoms of fascistic tendencies in digital technology and the limitation of a surface reading of these effects. This is addressed by digging further into the influence of rationality on computation. Drawing special attention to the work of David Golumbia, who sadly passed away last year, I want to consider how digital technology surfaces and propagates fascistic thinking, whether through its parasitic relationship with neoliberalism, its reproduction of biases it presents as "neutral," or the surveillance mechanisms that are baked into computers themselves. As an imagined antidote to these tendencies, the second part of the literature review frames technology with a palette of tools and scholarship from Anarchist and Marxist autonomist movements, such as cultural reproduction and subjectivation. This section further explores certain notions pertaining to imagination and desire, mostly through the work of Félix Guattari, Gilles Deleuze, and Franco "Bifo" Berardi. The third and final part of this research consists of an account of

the webradio itself, such as programming content and technical details. It also reflects on the potential of creative projects such as this one to activate the political mind, as a counterpoison to the structures of computation.

2. Computation Braided from Rationalism, Surveillance, and Fascism

One of my goals with this project is to assemble a critical framework that considers technology from a social justice studies perspective. More specifically, I am interested in *digital* technology, as it exposes more clearly certain centralizing, authoritarian, and anti-democratic powers that philosopher of technology Lewis Mumford described more than half a century ago.[9] I want to do this by focusing on three arguments that appear and disappear in this section, in no specific order. The first argument that I want to sustain through this section is that computation is mainly a cultural and social project. Far from being neutral, computers reproduce biases specific to humans. This can be seen in the effect that these biases create but more importantly, it can be seen in the alleged rational "neutrality" of computing itself. My second argument flows directly from this: since it is created and distributed from the dominating culture, computation also reproduces hierarchical structures that come from the top-down and flow upward. Computation, to paraphrase David Golumbia, is fundamentally a means to concentrate power rather than distribute it.[10] This means that the most powerful individuals, controlling the most powerful corporations, in the most powerful countries, can shape computation to serve their own needs. Like so many internalized forms of control, computation rules from the top but is empowered from the bottom. My last argument is that using technology without critically considering its effect is never a positive—or even neutral—proposition. In more ways than one, technology used "as is" is detrimental to social equity, and is primed to reproduce and generate worldviews that are

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9   "[We] are now rapidly approaching a point at which, unless we radically alter our present course, our surviving democratic technics will be completely suppressed or supplanted, so that every residual autonomy will be wiped out, or will be permitted only as a playful device of government, like national balloting for already chosen leaders in totalitarian countries." Mumford, "Authoritarian and Democratic Technics," 2.
10   Golumbia, *The Cultural Logic of Computation*, 151.

narrow-minded and illiberal.[11] Left unchecked, technological optimism simply acts as an accelerant for inequities.

Digital technology is often hailed as a cure-all for complex social problems like illiteracy and poverty.[12] This neoliberal and misguided narrative has been insufficiently challenged in social justice studies, where technology is rarely subjected to critical analysis, let alone actively designed or created with social equity in mind.[13] Rather, the progress and adoption of technology are generally proposed to be inherently emancipatory. This is what David Golumbia calls *cyberliberalism*, that is the lingering idea that "widespread computerization naturally produces democracy and freedom" and that "computer expertise is seen as directly applicable to social questions."[14] Beyond technological optimism, the voluminous writing of transhumanists such as Ray Kurzweil or futurists such as Clay Shirky plants itself firmly into a form of determinism that not only embraces the structures brought on by technology but pushes back on efforts to regulate it. Of course, this discourse is embraced and amplified by contemporary market-makers, and apostles of technological determinism such as Jeff Bezos, Elon Musk, Peter Thiel, Bill Gates, and Marc Andreessen. It is as if the mainstream "thinkers" and "makers" of digital technology have aligned perfectly in their view of the future. Without surprise, it caters to white Anglophone Americans who are very, very, *very* rich. It is as if, after the Clinton administration, when the term "digital divide" first appeared, and after the ruinous dot-com bubble, the 1990s debates around globalization and free trade agreements morphed into more palatable talks about technology adoption. Looking back on the last thirty years of Silicon Valley hegemony, one can propose the following: not only does the rapacious hunger for technical progress stands side-by-side with the values

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11 Take for instance how fascistic movements and their rhetoric thrive in systems ruled by order and rationality, two qualities which are fundamental to computation.
12 Greene, *The Promise of Access*, 173; Greene, "Discovering the Divide."
13 Costanza-Chock, *Design Justice*, 6,29.
14 Golumbia, "Cyberlibertarians' Digital Deletion of the Left."

of neoliberalism, but it has also become synonymous with it. This is what cyberliberalism really is: a moment where there exist no great differences between MIT's ideal future and Jeff Bezos'.

The democratically corrosive union between venture capitalists and technological evangelists can be seen in Joi Ito's sordid trajectory. A venture capitalist and author of the techno-optimist *Whiplash: How to Survive Our Faster Future*, Ito was the director of the MIT Media Lab between 2011 and 2019. Echoing Facebook's own arrogant slogan to "go fast and break things," Ito's motto for the Media Lab during his tenure was "deploy or die." On his watch, the Media Lab partnered with billionaire Reid Hoffman (co-creator of LinkedIn) to create an annual award meant to "celebrate the kind of [tech] disobedience that can benefit society."[15] This attitude, tinged with neoliberal hubris, is far from benefiting society. In fact, it eats at the democratic scaffolding that allows the majority to find a voice.

Furthermore, just like the venture capitalists it churns out, engineering-focused institutions such as MIT and Stanford have nurtured decade-long relationships with the defense industry, military contractors, and arms manufacturers.[16] Malcom Harris, in a recently published book on the subject, offers a comprehensive history of the collusion between research universities, the military-industrial complex, and venture capitalists in California.[17] Hand in hand, the makers and the thinkers of technology are corralling us towards their inescapable vision of the future. A future for which, we are told, there is no alternative. As predicted by Mumford, this centralization has brought up with it totalitarian control over the ways in which we interact with each other and through no accident, it has also brought up a resurgence of fascist activation.

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15 Ito was eventually forced to resign in disgrace after his ties with financier-turned-pimp Jeffrey Epstein became impossible to hide from the books—Ito happily accepted donations to MIT from Epstein after the latter's conviction as a sexual offender in 2010. Halpern; McMurtrie, "'Question the Law.'"
16 Dombrowski and Gholz, *Buying Military Transformation*.
17 Harris, *Palo Alto*.

The path between digital technology and fascistic tendencies is well-trodden, whether it is considering Elon Musk's power over Twitter, or Marc Andreessen's deranged techo-optimist manifesto.[18] There are two layers to this analysis: a surface layer and a bedrock layer. Most scholarship focuses on how technology radicalizes people on the surface layer. For instance, how the online "manosphere" communities accelerate the radicalization of fragile young men from pathetic pick-up artists to women-hating "incels."[19] Similarly, an increasing number of women are being lured into the far-right by way of a return to traditional heteronormative partnerships—the so-called tradwife influencers.[20] (While they reproduce patriarchal structures at opposite ends of the gender construct, it seems important to stress that these toxic communities form a vile yet united coalition of bigots against all non-binary gender expressions.) The scholarship looking at this kind of radicalization is useful and most definitely needed. But while it allows us to understand the effects of our current technological landscape, it lacks a certain depth. Even substantive collection of work, such as *The Emerald International Handbook of Technology-Facilitated Violence and Abuse,* focuses on the symptoms of intolerance that juts out of the face of technology.[21] Works that build upon critical media theory offer a slightly deeper understanding of the turn taken by digital spaces toward intolerance. There is for instance a growing interest in framing online radicalization under the auspice of fascism, notably by investigative journalists monitoring online far-right movements.[22] While valuable in its own right, focusing on the outcome stops short of attempting to understand how technology itself is created by (and creates) fascistic structures. In his introduction to *Digital Fascism*, Christian Fuchs proposes that "If we want to understand how digital fascism works . . . our analyses and understandings of [it] should be based on and go beyond the analysis of historical examples."[23] Fuchs further writes that "[digital fascism] is

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18 Andreessen, "The Techno-Optimist Manifesto"; "Elon Musk Is Using Twitter to Defend Brazil's Fascists."
19 Bratich and Banet-Weiser, "From Pick-Up Artists to Incels"; "Découvrir Le Profil Psychologique Des Incels."
20 Zahay, "What 'Real' Women Want"; Leidig, "The Making of a Tradwife."
21 Bailey, Flynn, and Henry, *The Emerald International Handbook of Technology-Facilitated Violence and Abuse*.
22 Faramelli and Piper, "Everybody Wants to Be a Fascist Online."
23 Fuchs, *Digital Fascism*, 3.

fascism organized on a new level."[24] I agree with the caveat that it is organized on *many* new levels. It

is these multiple levels, resting on the structuring bedrock of technology, that need to be assessed and

challenged, since like fractals, everything built upon them will reflect a glint of fascistic order.

2.1 Digging Deeper

Cryptocurrency, with its revolving cast of hucksters, scammers, libertarians, and overall

discontents, offers a mineshaft into this deeper layer. It allows us to question how much of an intolerant

discourse was *built into* the tools, programs, and structures that made cryptocurrency, rather than added

upon it. It is often said that computers do not make mistakes, they simply do what they are told to do by

(fallible) humans. We can take this reasoning to its limit by using cryptocurrency and an example and

find out what sort of human mistakes are reflected in it.

In his 2016 monograph on Bitcoin, digital technologies critic David Golumbia proposes bluntly

that on account of its proponents' views on freedom and government, "Bitcoin and the blockchain

technology on which it rests satisfy needs that make sense only in the context of right-wing politics."[25]

That is to say that Bitcoin, the original and most popular cryptocurrency, has actualized libertarian and

anarcho-capitalist doctrines into a Trojan of sorts, from within which these ideas can (and have)

penetrate the mainstream.[26] Generally speaking, the libertarian ideology is itself a scattered political

program aiming to do without regulations and promote its own interpretation of "freedom".[27] Critically

assessing the work of "cyber-libertarian pundit" Clay Shirky, Golumbia observes that this worldview

often requires "incumbents" institutions (what most of us associate with democratic and civil societies

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24 Fuchs, 3.
25 Golumbia, *The Politics of Bitcoin Software as Right-Wing Extremism*, 3–12.
26 "[That] is, whatever the software itself does, what 'Bitcoin' as a cultural object does is to promote a politics that is visible only if one knows where to look . . . In this sense, we can argue that Bitcoin is politics masquerading as technology, or technology soliciting and promoting a very specific politics." These politics, simply put, are obsessed with deregulation—both financial and technological. Golumbia, "Bitcoin as Politics: Distributed Right-Wing Extremism."
27 It is interesting to point out the concurrent surge of "Detaxers" or "Freemen-on-the-Land" pseudolaw movements in North America. Although it echos complex 1990s anxieties about individual freedoms in the USA—e.g. the Ruby Ridge siege that galvanized Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nicals into action, or the writing of Ted Kaczynski—it is also, like cryptocurrency, clearly tied to financial ideals. Netolitzky, "New Hosts for an Old Disease."

—e.g. governments, unions, regulators) to disappear altogether and make place for governance models that necessarily depends on digital technology.[28] This self-serving view, borrowed from a start-up culture that revels in "disruption," is, of course, careful to not question who makes, operates, or owns this compulsory, supposedly liberating technology. Attacking cryptocurrencies' lofty ideals of liberation, Golumbia correctly considers them to be "[tools] for existing power to concentrate, rather than a challenge to the existing order."[29]

Beyond cryptocurrencies, scholars have pointed to other comorbidities between right-wingers and technologists. For instance, how the neoreactionary movement, championed by the likes of Peter Thiel, Nick Land, and Curtis Yarvin, circulate extremely prejudiced ideas about sovereignty and race.[30] Perhaps the most curious historiography on the subject is a text written under the pseudonym of Josephine Armistead and titled "The Silicon Ideology". In it, the anonymous author draws a genealogy from twentieth-century fascism to transhumanism, all the way to the 2010s emergence of the neoreactionary movement, with which many technologists working on artificial intelligence are now associated in one way or another.[31] This "Silicon Ideology," which is obsessed with order and rationality, has been critiqued by insiders such as Corey Pein in *Live Work Work Work Die: A Journey into the Savage Heart of Silicon Valley*, Wendy Liu in *Abolish Silicon Valley: How to Liberate Technology from Capitalism*, and Andrew Norman Wilson's "The Artist Leaving the Googleplex".[32] In a piece for Viewpoint Magazine, writer Shuja Haider similarly concluded that the neoreactionary discourse about technology has only served to propagate the neoliberal "pseudoscience of Silicon Valley hyperracism."[33]

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28 Golumbia, "Zealots of the Blockchain."
29 Golumbia, *The Politics of Bitcoin Software as Right-Wing Extremism*, 63.
30 Sandifer and Graham, *Neoreaction a Basilisk*; Smith and Burrows, "Software, Sovereignty and the Post-Neoliberal Politics of Exit"; Haider, "The Darkness at the End of the Tunnel."
31 Armistead, "The Silicon Ideology." Although somewhat diffuse and unconventional, the essay interestingly explores interesting cultural trends such as anarcho-capitalists recycling of popular cultures (e.g. Watchmen, The Matrix, Warhammer 40K) into fascistic models, and the libertarians' increasingly coziness with monarchism.
32 Pein, *Live Work Work Work Die*; Liu, *Abolish Silicon Valley*; "The Artist Leaving the Googleplex - Journal #74."
33 Haider, "The Darkness at the End of the Tunnel." See also Golumbia's later writing about artificial intelligence's role in reproducing scientific racism and white supremacist structures, shattering any presumption that AI is in any way objective or meant to be neutral (Golumbia, "The Great White Robot God.").

Recent events in San Francisco, where most of the American startup industry is based, offer a ready-made example of this fascistic and authoritarian turn. A former general partner at Andreesen-Horowitz, one of the most influential and powerful venture capitalist funds in the world, has recently used the American Civil War as an analogy to help rationalize the imaginary secession of San Francisco. In a widely watched video, Balaji Srinivasan imagines how "tech loyalists" would be identified by gray uniforms and given government ID allowing them (and them only) to vote, go to certain parts of the city, and throw "Gray Pride Parades."[34] While this premise sounds too literal to be anything but a joke, Srinivasan has self-published a foreboding book on the subject, arguing that technology should enable "us" to create more than companies, but new cities and even new countries.[35] To reiterate, this is not the unhinged droning of a basement recluse, it is the unhinged droning of someone who holds considerable power and influence over billions of dollars and an unquantifiable network of tech entrepreneurs. One of Srinivasan's most prominent cheerleaders is Garry Tan. A despicable human being in his own right,[36] Tan is the current CEO of Ycombinator, arguably the world's foremost startup incubator. Having taken companies such as Airbnb, Doordash, and Dropbox public, Ycombinator is responsible for funneling more than $600 billion dollars into the speculative stock market and back into the pockets of venture capitalists.[37] Perhaps even more concerning than his central role in the startup world, Tan is currently "at war" with the mayorship of San Francisco, and has been considering running for mayorship himself. His tentative platform to "bring order" and make the city "private" is lifted almost words for words from Srinivasan's book (the imaginary "Grays" are a faction literally led by Tan in the book).[38] Widely considered to hold almost as much political influence as San Francisco's mayor London Breed, Tan has just announced a "fireside chat" led by right-wing

34 Duran, "Cool Gray City of Tech Authoritarians."
35 "The Network State."
36 Among other things, Tan infamously reworked the lyrics of Tupac's Shakur's "Hit'em Up" to wish a slow death on eleven progressive members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors."S.F. Tech Exec, Donor Garry Tan Apologizes after Angry Tweet."
37 "The YC Startup Directory."
38 "The Tech Plutocrats Dreaming of a Right-Wing San Francisco"; "Y Combinator's Garry Tan Declares War on San Francisco Politics."

billionaire Peter Thiel, for the benefit of Christian tech workers in San Francisco. At the event, Thiel

will expand on his homspun "political theology [and how it applies to] fields like civil society, history,

economics, and morality."[39] Conservatives and right-wing gargoyles, far from disputing the fact that

technology is a political and social project, have instead embraced and weaponized it to ascend towards

evermore powerful perchs.

2.2 Power and Surveillance

Another way inherently repressive politics show up in digital technologies is through their

uncanny fit for spying on people. It is no accident that Peter Thiel's latest venture, Palantir, is

effectively selling mass surveillance as a service to law enforcement.[40] (It should equally come as no

surprise that Garry Tan was employee number ten at Palantir.) Golumbia's work helps us illustrate how

the extreme rationality of computation can not only become anti-democratic but can devolve into

distributed surveillance apparatuses:

> My point is not to simply raise a kind of Luddite anti-technologism according to which we
> should simply dispose of all computers; my point is to raise the question wherether the shape,
> function, and ubiquity of the computing network is something that should be brought under
> democratic control in a way that it is not today. *I do not think computing is an industry like any
> other, or even, a communications medium like any other; rather, it is a name for the
> administrative control and concentration powers of our society—in a sense, precisely what
> Foucault would call our governmentality.*[41] (Emphasis mine.)

Departing from the concept's usual focus on individual subjectivation, Golumbia proposes to apply

governmentality not only to individual, but to the computational infrastructure with which they are in

constant dialogue—infrastructures are both informing and informed by expectation vis-a-vis computers.

This is similar to another reading of Foucault made by Deleuze in "Postscript on the Societies of

Control," where he imagine how future systems of control (schools, prisons, hospitals, corporations)

might tighten their grasp over individuals by either abstracting coercive mechanisms so they escape

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39   "Garry Tan Is Not Just a Cryptofascist, He's a Christofascist!"
40   Biddle, "How Peter Thiel's Palantir Helped the NSA Spy on the Whole World."
41   Golumbia, *The Cultural Logic of Computation*, 25.

human grasp, or automate processes to get rid of humans altogether.[42] By outsourcing so many things to our devices, we have also outsourced some of that governmentality.

Deleuze's direct contribution to surveillance studies, while relatively small, has been important for the field to move beyond the panopticon, which for decades was the only framework used to discuss technological surveillance.[43] Surveillance studies have since been crucial in understanding the complex effect of computing. In fact, Golumbia correctly recognizes that surveillance studies has offered one of the only sustained critic of computing.[44] This scholarship has mapped the role of computer surveillance in many aspects of our lives, among other things its relation to capitalism (Zuboff, Sadowski), to policing and carceral systems (Brayne, Benjamin, Crosby et al.), and to social processes (Marx).[45] To further my point about technology naturally serving an agenda that is extractive, biased, and unjust, I want to focus on the use of technology to exclude and discriminate based on gender and race.

Critics of automated discrimination are often dismissed, and the problems they point out are often blamed on implementation or human errors. When considering these excuses, it is helpful to go back to cybernetic theorist Stafford Beer's dictum that the "purpose of the system is what it does."[46] To truly understand the cause and effects of complex systems, "[this dictum] makes a better starting point," Beer states, "than the familiar attributions of good intentions, prejudices about expectations, moral judgments, or sheer ignorance of circumstances."[47] In other words, technology should be critiqued on the ground of its results rather than its goals.

Recently, more attention has been given to automation and intentionality by scholars interested in racial surveillance. Simone Browne, in her landmark 2015 book *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance*

42 Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control."
43 Haggerty, "Tear down the Walls."
44 Golumbia, *The Cultural Logic of Computation*, 151.
45 Zuboff, "Big Other"; Sadowski, *Too Smart*; Brayne, *Predict and Surveil: Data, Discretion, and the Future of Policing*; Benjamin, *Captivating Technology*; Crosby, Crosby, and Monaghan, *Policing Indigenous Movements*; Marx, *Windows into the Soul*.
46 Beer, "What Is Cybernetics?"
47 Beer, 217.

of Blackness, shows how racism sewed itself into systems of surveillance from the very beginning, first as a means to turn the bodies of slaves into legible property (ch. 1–2), and then, later, to legitimize violence systematically enacted upon them, notably by the State (ch. 3–4).[48] Her conception of "racializing surveillance" illustrates how norms, policies, and expectations about race naturally create surveillance practices and technologies that reproduce racism and white supremacy.[49] For instance, it has been repeatedly demonstrated that automated classification is recklessly inaccurate, especially for women of color.[50] A recent report from the Citizen Lab is especially instructive when attempting to understand algorithmic biases and the pretense of neutrality in the Canadian policing context:

> Numerous [inaccuracies and biases] are present in most of the common sources of police data in Canada. As a result, drawing unbiased and reliable inferences based on historical police data is, in all likelihood, impossible. Extreme caution must be exercised before law enforcement authorities are permitted, if at all, to use algorithmic policing technologies that process mass police data sets. Otherwise, these technologies may exacerbate the already unconstitutional and devastating impact of systemic targeting of marginalized communities. [51]

These built-in inaccuracies and biases have thankfully received more academic attention, most notably through the work of Safyia Noble, a surveillance studies scholar and civil rights activist. Her work has been invaluable in understand how algorithms reinforce discrimination and contribute to the continued alienation and oppression of racialized people.[52] Building further upon the work of Kimberlé Crenshaw and Patricia Hill Collins to specifically address technology, Noble has argued for a theory of digital intersectionality that "fully captures representations, critical praxis, and the changing racial landscape" of our digital worlds.[53] Since exclusion and discrimination always feed off some sort of system of classification, critical surveillance studies stand against the notion, fundamental to computing, of order.

2.3 Order, Hippies, Capitalism, and Computationalism

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48 Browne, *Dark Matters*.
49 See also Browne, "Race and Surveillance.").
50 Buolamwini and Gebru, "Gender Shades: Intersectional Accuracy Disparities in Commercial Gender Classification"; *Coded Bias*; Brayne, *Predict and Surveil: Data, Discretion, and the Future of Policing*.
51 Robertson, Khoo, and Song, "To Surveil and Predict."
52 Noble, *Algorithms of Oppression*; Noble and Tynes, *The Intersectional Internet*.
53 Noble, Tynes, and Schuschke, "Digital Intersectionality Theory and the #BlackLivesMatter Movement," 21–40; Noble, *Algorithms of Oppression*, 171.

When pondering on the relation between order and technology, one has to consider Gottfried

Wilhelm Leibniz, the German polymath whose work on logic and mathematics is often considered to

be the beginning of computational science. Leibniz, who was born in 1646, was one of the first

philosophers to intuit the idea of computers, notably by developing differential calculus and imagining

complex machines to solve his equations. In a lecture on Leibniz, Gilles Deleuze describes his

approach to philosophy as such:

> This is a philosophy of order. He only thinks in terms of order. In one sense, today we'd say that
> he is extremely reactionary, he's a friend of order. But very oddly in this taste for order and to
> establish this order, he yields to the most insane, the craziest creation of concepts that we have
> ever witnessed in philosophy. Disheveled concepts, the most exuberant concepts, the most
> disordered, the most complex in order to justify what is. Very strange. Each thing must have a
> reason.[54]

Leibniz's commitment to order and rationalism left a deep imprint on computer science since, after all,

he believed that *everything* had to be computable. His goal to map even our thoughts and feelings to

mathematical operations—justifying order by any means necessary, as Deleuze says—has managed to

elevate rationalism over every other human value. These are the seeds of computationalism. Even more

concerning to Golumbia is the pre-supposed objectivity of computation, when it was forged within the

a priori of Western intellectual tradition, of which Leibniz was himself an instrument.[55] Not only does

this make computers agents of this tradition, it implants them with a philosophy of order in which

human "rationality" stands on top, obscuring the very fact that this rationality is itself subjective.

When personal computers became widespread in the 1990s, this conception of rationality was carried

on by neoliberal tides which invited all newcomers to the internet like it had invited them to the free

market. From those cresting waves, partitioning the whole internet among startups looked like a

fantastic good idea for venture capitalists. In a widely circulated 1995 essay, media theorists Richard

Barbrook and Andy Cameron labeled this strand of dotcom neoliberalism the "Californian ideology."[56]

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54 Deleuze, "Leibniz."
55 Golumbia, *The Cultural Logic of Computation*, 14–15.
56 Barbrook and Cameron, "The Californian Ideology."

At the time, the essay was critiqued by both sides of the political spectrum: Louis Rossetto, libertarian founder and editor-in-chief of Wired magazine, mocked the "utterly laughable Marxist/Fabian kneejerk that there is such a thing as the info-haves and have-nots," while Marxist autonomist Franco "Bifo" Berardi argued against Barbook and Cameron calls to oppose globalization, proposing that it would only encourage nationalism and fundamentalism.[57] Despite its divisive nature, the essay illuminated an important feature of the California/Silicon Valley ideology: it fermented and sprouted partially within the "lefty" utopist and liberal counterculture.[58] In *From Counterculture to Cyberculture,* Fred Turner explores how a whole generation of West Coast hippies slowly turned into callous techno-libertarians leading up to the 1990s.[59] Working out of a similar premise, documentary filmmaker Adam Curtis insisted on the importance of considering Ayn Rand's "objectivism"—a combination of "ethical egoism," idealized rationalism, and a celebration of free-market capitalism— to understand modern tech culture.[60] In its obsession with technology, free-market, individual freedom, and rationality, computationalism rears its ugly head once more.

It is worth circling back on the term since it describe many perverse qualities present in digital technology. While computationalism is often associated with the philosophical concept of the computational mind, Golumbia expands it to encompass ways in which computers are inherently primed to serve top-down power structures already in place. It has also let to the pursuit of rationality over everything else, accelerated by computers' order-based view of the world.[61] This has led to the resurgence of two latent but historical formations: computation as the new "absolutist leader whose will in fact transcends all rational calculation," and the accompanying debasement of the "'illogical'

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57 While counter intuitive on its own, Beradi's analysis is coherent with his lifelong suspicion of the State and capitalism: "[Barbrook and Cameron] talk of a European way—the way of the welfare state, public intervention within the economy, public control over technological innovation. Can we believe in this solution? I don't. [. . .] The alternative between policies of deregulation and policies of state intervention is a false alternative. There is no way of regulating capital."Berardi, "Response to the Californian Ideology by the Author of Neuromagma"; Rossetto, "Response to the Californian Ideology."
58 Haider, "The Darkness at the End of the Tunnel."
59 Turner, *From Counterculture to Cyberculture*.
60 "All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace."
61 Golumbia, *The Cultural Logic of Computation*, 7–14,221–225.

historical and social fabric of the human world."[62] Writing fifteen years ago, Golumbia foresaw the now

central role of AI as the omniscient, "objective" oracle-leader, and our own internalized disdain for

competing human processes, comparatively seen as messy, inefficient, and faillible.[63]

Another area affected by the cyberliberalism doctrine is the financial market, supposedly governed by

rational supply-demand mechanics. This shared idea, that a *natural order* will emerge and adjudicate

the good from the bad, makes neoliberalism and cyberliberalism indiscernible in many ways.[64] Both

neoliberalism and cyberliberalism propose that unrestricted access—to computation or to the market—

will naturally create freedom and its byproduct, democracy. This is not an accident, as computers have

become necessary to "run" the software of capitalism. As a matter of fact, the market has often been

referred to as a computer or a complex machine, on which our interferences only create "distortion".[65]

Naturally, computers have now become the biggest traders on the market, whether by volume or value

(52% of all equity trading in the US in 2022).[66] The lauded "digital revolution," heralded as the great

economic equalizer, has on the contrary accelerated the misfortunes of the proletariat while benefiting

those controlling the digital infrastructure, according to Marxist scholar Nick Dyer-Witherford.[67]

These new ways of processing information and establishing value—one could say modeled

after computation—relate to what both Berardi and Guattari call *semiocapitalism*, that is, a "capitalism

founded on immaterial labor" based on signifiers, and, especially for Berardi, a digitalization which

penetrates and control individuals.[68] Dyer-Witheford and his collaborators have explored this perhaps

more attentively than anyone else by using a historical materialist framework to understand how AI—

and technology in general—is transformed into "means of cognitions." This in turn realizes Marx's

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62 Golumbia, 14.
63 Of course, this is an illusion boosted by those who profit from repeating it. For instance, experimental self-driving cars are touted to be safer on the road than those driven by regular humans, even though by all measures they are neither self-driving, nor safer. Marx, "Self-Driving Cars Still Aren't the Future."
64 Golumbia, "Cyberlibertarians' Digital Deletion of the Left."
65 Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 58–59.
66 Zaharudin, Young, and Hsu, "High-Frequency Trading."
67 Dyer-Witheford, *Cyber-Proletariat*.
68 Berardi, *Precarious Rhapsody*, 107–108; Genosko, "Félix Guattari in the Age of Semiocapitalism."

idea of a general intellect which reproduces the general conditions of production.[69] Phrased slightly differently, technology acts as a feedback loop in its own reproduction. The authors further show that there is a clear lineage between the fatalist accelerationism championed by Nick Land, and a future "capitalist autonomization" bringing about fully a developed reactionary "AI-capitalism."[70] Acknowledging Golumbia's work on cyberliberalism, the authors state that "he is surely correct to identify a futurological fascist impulse in the affirmative adoption of [human-free] capitalism by right-wing accelerationist AI developers and computer programmers."[71]

3. Resistance Braided from Anarchism, Autonomism, Desire, and Imagination

As an elixir against the seemingly hegemonic authoritarian and biased computation of everything, we must look at resistance that is decentralized, that cut across, that exists in our messy hearts and our messy minds, out of the grasp of some positivist ordering algorithm. In this section, want to establish a bestiary of ideas that can help imagine this. To get there, I want to first look at a few practical and spontaneous examples of social cooperation and anarchist resistance, some having to do with technology, some simply having to do with cooperation outside of hierarchical structures. This naturally leads to thinking about the State, which will make it worthwhile to look at Marxist autonomist methodologies. The autonomist movement at large has uses and written extensively about technology, is fundamentally opposed to order, and has burnished powerful ideas around everyday resistance, such as social reproduction and subjectification. Finally, I want to think about the importance of desire in this moment, as desire can elicit creative responses to the injustices built in and reproduced by technology. It can also open up our imaginative appetite for unknown forms of resistance.

3.1 Cooperation Outside of Structures

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69 Dyer-Witheford, Kjøsen, and Steinhoff, *Inhuman Power*, 63.
70 Dyer-Witheford, Kjøsen, and Steinhoff, 156–157.
71 Dyer-Witheford, Kjøsen, and Steinhoff, 158.

While they tend to shy away from describing themself to be anarchists, initiatives that rely on mutual aid and social collaboration have become invaluable for communities everywhere. Like the Automotive Free Clinic in Alabama, these initiatives appear out of necessity, address specific problems, and show up where the state, the ultimate organizational structure, fails to hold up its end of the social contract.[72] Because they are much more attuned to survival needs, they often appear in moments of crisis: the Mutual Aid Disaster Relief group helping Puerto Ricans during Hurricane Maria in 2018, the Mutual Aid Medford & Somerville (MAMAS) in Boston during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Autonomous Social Center of Pointe-Saint-Charles, fighting promoters and gentrifiers in a working-class neighborhood of Montréal.[73] Free-form and spontaneous social cooperation challenge normative hierarchies of care by mobilizing from the bottom-up, often cutting through the red tape of bureaucracy.[74]

Distributed and decentralized autonomous initiatives sometimes offer pockets of resistance against computationalism. In some cases, these initiatives have wide reach and broad applications. For instance, the Pirate Care research project and activist network circulate interesting models of activism by documenting "self-organising technologically-enabled care & solidarity networks" opposing the punitive neoliberal policies.[75] Other initiatives are more specific and topical. The POSTME coalition in Minneapolis, for instance, leveraged a decentralized network of grassroots activists and technologists to successfully ban facial recognition in Minneapolis.[76] It follows that the commoning of digital expertise, tools, and knowledge, coupled with new self-organizing approaches to social reproduction, allow us all to participate in care.[77] Similarly, technical sovereignty and establishing shared "data commons" can empower hyperlocal autonomous initiatives, which in turn use this data to advocate for themselves.[78]

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72 Spade, *Mutual Aid*, 1–5.
73 Spade, 18; Wilson, Roskill, and Mahr, "Mutual Aid Using Digital Technology"; Kruzynski, "L'autonomie Collective En Action."
74 Gelderloos, *Anarchy Works*, 3–4.
75 Pirate Care, "The Pirate Care Concept."
76 Munira Mohamed and Chris Weiland, "Hacking Local Politics - How We Banned Facial Recognition in Minneapolis."
77 Pirate Care, "The Pirate Care Syllabus."
78 Renzi et al., "Digital Divides: Parc Extension Community-Based Action Research Network," 37.

As pointed out in a 2022 report on the digital divide in the Parc-Extension neighborhood of Montreal, commoning artificial intelligence technology and bottom-up tech initiatives allow community groups to imagine "what kind of data and technical infrastructure would be beneficial to them."[79] More than simply giving access, it is also imperative to engage communities in the creation of their own tools. To this end, researcher and designer Sasha Costanza-Chock has attempted to create a framework, design justice, that empowers "communities to be co-researchers and co-designers" of technology.[80]

Although I am imagining these frameworks applied in some sort of resistance to computation, they have existed for much longer than computers have been around. As activist and scholar Modibo Kadalie has shown, marooned communities in North America, most of them escaped African slaves and displaced Indigenous people, emancipated themselves outside of oppressive hierarchies through "intimate direct democracy" well before there was such a thing as anarchism.[81] "Intimate direct democracy," Kadalie explains, "is what many Indigenous peoples in the Americas were already practicing at the time of European invasion."[82] Activist and Mohawk scholar Gerald Taiaiake Alfred has written how anarcho-Indigenism is less of a movement and more of a continuous attempt at building solidarity and resistance against all forms of colonialism.[83] In fact, there are written accounts of Iroquois laughing at the absurdity of anyone serving a king, since to them we are all sovereign and the world was ours to share.[84] Non-hierarchical social collaboration was also how many people across Africa organized, through Pan-African movements of social ecologies.[85] These movements imagined democratic governance built upon the "[relationships] that human society shares with the rest of the

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79 Renzi et al., 48.
80 Costanza-Chock, *Design Justice*, 11,15; Costanza-Chock et al., "#MoreThanCode: Practitioners Reimagine the Landscape of Technology for Justice and Equity," 28.
81 Kadalie, *Intimate Direct Democracy*.
82 Kadalie, Re-learning the past to re-imagine the future,.
83 Alfred, *Wasáse*.
84 Dupuis-Déri and Pillet, *L'anarcho-indigénisme*, 8.
85 "To me, Pan-Africanism is useful as a directly democratic people's framework, particularly applied to local struggle. It can be applied in the same way as the Indigenous peoples' movement, or a working-class people's movement: not for the reform of the nation-state or for a nationalist movement, but as a decentralized anti-state movement rooted where Black or Indigenous people live and struggle; a non-exclusive movement rooted including all local activists who are engaged in autonomous self-organization and the create of directly democratic institutions that can respect all oppressed people." Kadalie, *Pan-African Social Ecology*, 117.

natural world."[86] These forms of organization are far removed from centering everything around human experience or creating hierarchical structures of power. In fact, they oppose most form of centralization which are the hallmarks of any State.

3.2 A Struggle Inside and Against the State

Suspicion of the State and a recognition of the sovereignty of individuals naturally bring us to the autonomists. Marxist autonomism, sometimes referred to as *autonomia,* is generally understood to have formed in industry-heavy northern Italy during the 1960s–70s. Influenced by the Situationist International and the worker's movement (workerism/*operaismo*), it was famously heterogeneous and dynamic.[87] The ideas it developed around the power of workers have greatly influenced post-Marxist discourses and have allowed scholars such as Nick Dyer-Witheford, Michael Hardt, and Antonio Negri to carry on some of its theory to the current moment.[88] Rather than exhaustively trace this lineage, I would like to cherry-pick certain aspects that resonate with my project and my idea of resistance to computationalism, fascism, and capitalism.

Autonomy focuses on the emancipation of individuals by centering the lived experience of workers, thus decentralizing the process of subjectivation away from the State and capitalist powers, placing it into the individuals' own hands.[89] Relating to Foucault' idea of biopolitics and governmentality, subjectivation is the process through which individuals are transformed into governable subjects, often by taking on and reproducing predominant norms and values.[90] This makes autonomy unique amongst Marxist theories: it is disinterested with capital since it proposes that the real power lies with individuals and how they are "created". For autonomists, struggle is vital and perpetual.

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86 Kadalie, 86.
87 For a multifaceted account of the movement, see the excellent *Autonomia*, edited by Sylvère Lotringer and Christian Marazzi.
88 The most substantial modern addition to the autonomist tradition is probably Hardt and Negri's work on what they call "Empire".
89 Berardi, *Precarious Rhapsody*, 74.
90 Young, *The Deleuze and Guattari Dictionary*, 302–304. To understand how this process relates to neoliberalism and more specifically, to democratic processes, see Wendy Brown's *Undoing the Demos.*

It happens all the time, everywhere, and changes in the conditions of production do not come from a struggle *for* the top, but from a struggle *from* the bottom.[91] Psychoanalyst Félix Guattari who, alongside Gilles Deleuze, defined many social concepts used by the autonomists, explains that "every perspective of struggle formulated within a national framework annuls its efficacy in advance," since any meaningful social movement needs to be fragmented, multi-centered, regenerative, and animated by multiple theories and antagonisms.[92] Autonomist researcher and communication scholar Alessandra Renzi recognizes both this plural nature and the movement's reversal of the habitual direction of power:

> In its most generic sense, the word *autonomy* refers to a disenfranchisement from party politics and orthodox Marxism, and to the prioritization of the agency of the worker over processes of capital accumulation. *Autonomia* was a large, heterogeneous movement traversed by several currents, from feminism to vanguardism, from spontaneism to armed struggle. As such, no account of label can do it justice . . . In other words, *autonomia*, was a movement that brought a variety of people together inside and outside the factory gates to rethink how capitalism oppresses, how one lives, and how one struggles in novel ways." [93]

This situates autonomism as a challenge to capitalism from within—"inside and against"—which makes it a sort of antidote to internalized and structural forms of control.[94] Another strength lies in its radical process of composition and decomposition, which constantly re-imagines actions of opposition (e.g. sabotage, strikes, reduction of consumption) that keeps up with the evolving facets of exploitation; as a working-class revolutionary movement, it is *defined* by its discontinuity. This is part of what Negri calls the "self-valorisation" of the working class, which short-circuits the ceaseless capitalist restructurisation attempts of the State by affirming one's need over that of capital.[95] We circle back to the State because it is, according to autonomists—and in different measures, for anarchists—the

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91 According to Berardi, this perpetual and changing struggle can take many different forms but always exist beyond the usual zone of production, since it is inherently a social process rather than strictly a worker's movement: "social life does not only depend on the disciplinary regulation imposed by economic power, but also depends on the internal displacement, shifts, settling and dissolutions that are the process of the self-composition of living society; struggle, withdrawal, alienation, sabotage, and lines of flight from the capitalist system of domination." Berardi, *Precarious Rhapsody*, 75.

92 Guattari, "The Proliferation of Margins," 110.

93 Renzi, *Hacked Transmissions*, 43–44.

94 Lotringer and Marazzi, "The Return of Politics," 14.

95 Negri, "Domination and Sabotage," 67–71.

terminal structure of capitalism. This is because, as Mario Tronti explains, the State has itself become an "instrument of production."[96] Tronti, who was one of the leaders of the Italian workers movement of the 1960s, assessed that it was workers who ultimately held the power and agency to block production or "divert its cumulative force toward the production of other forms of value."[97]

3.3 Cultural Reproduction and Radio

Technology has sometimes been associated with autonomist resistance since workers, used to operating machines in factories, made creative use of it to amplify their messages and organize. One way to interpret these forms of resistance is through the concept of social and cultural reproduction,[98] usually associated with French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, but aligning closely with autonomist and feminist theory through its echo of Tronti's "social factory."[99] According to professor Renzi, cultural reproduction, the ways by which we share and distribute our values and ideas, have been the most effective engine of antifascist and anticapitalist resistance.[100] There have been many examples of autonomist cultural reproduction in the 1960s and 1970s, most notably Radio Alice, but there were also zines, posters, music shows, theatre production, etc.[101] During Berlusconi's reign, when the technology permitted it, there even was a resurgence of autonomist media activism through rogue video broadcasts that critiqued the State and its media monopoly.[102]

Radio, in all its forms, can be a potent weapon against capitalism and fascism by engaging people in two different ways. First, by amplifying certain chosen discourses it can become a tribune for cultural

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96 Tronti, "The Strategy of Refusal," 32.
97 Renzi, *Hacked Transmissions*, 49.
98 While the term "social reproduction" is often used by Marxist scholars to describe the "production" of human being, including but not limited to their physical birth, I am using the term "cultural reproduction" to more explicitly bring to mind creative interventions.
99 Renzi, *Hacked Transmissions,* 72; Arruzza, Bhattacharya, and Fraser, *Feminism for the 99%,* 67–80; Thorburn, "Networked Social Reproduction."
100 Renzi, Interview with Alessandra Renzi.
101 Renzi, *Hacked Transmissions*, 56, 83; Thorburn, "Human-Machinic Assemblages," 85.
102 Renzi*, Hacked Transmissions*, 113–115.

reproduction. Second, it encourages people to critically think about media infrastructure and how to

break away from the restrictive topologies it creates. Because of this, and while it was only a strand of

a broad resistance, Radio Alice became an enduring symbol of autonomism.[103] Franco "Bifo" Berardi,

who was integral to the operation of the radio, proposed in a 2005 interview that its greatest strength

was not to distribute an agenda, but to engage the masses who felt disabused and exploited to speak up,

and initiate their own moments of resistance:

> A lot of people came on [Radio Alice] between February 1976 and March 1977. It was an extremely exciting year, culturally and politically speaking. From this point of view, [Radio Alice] did play a role: not an organizational role, not a directing role, but instead a diffusion role for a new political sentiment. Nowadays, [using guattarian terms,] we would say a "rhizomatic" role, that is the idea that the role of media is not plant ideas in people's head, but to "give a voice to those who never had it" (*donner la parole à ceux qui ne l'ont jamais eu*). Of course, this quickly merged with the revolt movement: we were converging with a movement that was down in the streets, in schools, in factories, etc... So when the situation exploded in February-March 1977, after this moment [Radio Alice] became a sort of instrument of revolt.[104]

What made Radio Alice especially powerful was its role as a *carrier* of voices often silenced, notably

through the call-in relationship it had with its listenership.[105] Although not framed by a specific moment

of struggle, there are similar initiatives today. For instance, the Shortwave Collective, which is a

network of international feminist activists organizing do-it-yourself radio workshops.[106] Another

example is the use and perceived misuse of the "citizen band" (CB) radio in the US. Writing on the

audibility of race and gender, cultural history professor Art M. Blake has written on how the ability to

receive and broadcast over CB allowed marginalized Black communities to find each other and create

new forms of mobility that had been otherwise denied to them.[107] Blake also observes how the

popularity of CB radio, initially energetically invested by anxious suburbans as a "technology of white

rescue," was at the same time used by vulnerable voices to coordinate against and around racist police

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103 Despite its short operation (13 months), Radio Alice captured the imagination beyond Marxist and worker resistance, as can been see in the loosely fictionalized 2004 film, *Lavorare Con Lentezza*.
104 Berardi, Entretien Avec Franco Berardi Dit « Bifo »; my translation.
105 Renzi, *Hacked Transmissions*, 59–60.
106 "Shortwave Collective."
107 Blake, "Audible Citizenship and Audiomobility."

and mob violence.[108] In Canada, different forms of radio have similarly been associated with anti-colonial practice. Formed in 1983, the *Société de Communication Atikamekw Montagnais* (SOCAM) is a network of FM radio stations serving Atikamekw and Montagnais communities under a big independent broadcasting coalition, with a goal to use radio to promote their language and culture.[109] Radio can also mean other forms of transmission. Based out of Sioux Lookout, KuhKenah/KNET is a telecommunication and satellite network owned, managed, and operated by the Anishinaabe community that offers internet services and contributes to Indigenous digital self-determination.[110]

3.4 Cutting Across Desire By Way of Subjectivation

The guattarian concept of transversality brings up the possibility of association across multiple movements, across ideals, and on an individual basis.[111] Guattari imagined transversality as a way to cut across both the vertical structures of hierarchy, and the horizontal structures of conformity and bureaucracy, which he saw as the *de facto* modes of unchecked power within the State.[112] Bifo explains in a 2005 interview, that transversality is fundamentally the idea that there is no unified working class, but rather a continual process of individual subjectivation through ("*à travers*") multiple social layers and ways of life.[113] These transversal individualities then assemble and disassemble through the fluctuations of concurrent struggles, which are focused on becoming rather than being:

> Processes of subjectivation means that you project a word and this word go through, you project a radio voice and this radio go through multiple forms of social existences, of social imaginations... Communication then become not the direct expression of a centralized identity of the working class, but rather a process of *transversalisation* of society.[114]

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108 Blake, *Radio, Race, and Audible Difference in Post-1945 America*, 17,24.
109 "Société de Communication Atikamekw Montagnais."
110 KNet, "About the Kuh-Ke-Nah Network (KNET) – Kuhkenah Network"; McMaster, "How Indigenous Communities Are Taking Broadband Internet Access into Their Own Hands."
111 While it appeared as a way for Guattari to describe a methodology for clinical psychiatry that broke away from classical Freudian, transference-based methods, it became useful to describe many other processes of social organization. Young, *The Deleuze and Guattari Dictionary*, 320.
112 Guattari, *Psychoanalysis and Transversality*, 112–114.
113 Berardi, Entretien Avec Franco Berardi Dit « Bifo »; my translation.
114 Berardi; my translation.

This once again highlights the power of subjectivation in transforming society from the bottom up. Alessandra Renzi points out that according to autonomist theory, the social liberation of subjects necessarily goes through a process of subjectivation by producing alternative forms of self-valorization —recognizing our own social value beyond notions of productivity.[115] It also speaks to what Deleuze and Guattari called the rhizome, or the self-activated and spore-like nature of subject creation. Because of its opposition to linearity and organization, the rhizome has been used in new media studies to speak of the arrangement of information that creates new "line of flights" between entities and ruptures the usual relational power of signifiers, such as hypertext and networks.[116] Perhaps maybe even more important is the rhizome's ability to create connective tissues of anti-fascist engagement among individuals by rejecting the structures that reproduce nationalist or racist universality.[117] "[The] rhizome is made only of lines," Deleuze and Guattari write in *Mille Plateau*, and "operates by variation, expansion, conquest, capture, puncture." It is a map that composes and decomposes itself, "without an organizing memory or central automaton, defined solely by a circulation of states."[118] This continual process engages individuals to adapt their views and actions, therefore regenerating their own subjectivity. Furthermore, through transversal and rhizomatic subjectification, they become inoculated against the hierarchical and binary logic of computationalism.

Deleuze and Guattari broke from classical psychoanalysis theory by proposing that desire, rather than lack or envy, perhaps more faithfully explained human nature. As much as it can be a potent antidote to nihilism, desire can also be manipulated to fan a different flame. For instance, Max Haiven writes of the seemingly boundless desire for punishment that capitalism cruelly lays against the very masses it exploits, as well as the masses' own desire for an "avenging imaginary."[119] Writing about "dark desires" and repression, Berardi observes that "desiring creativity has to constantly come to

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115 Renzi, *Hacked Transmissions*, 50.
116 Wardrip-Fruin, Montfort, and Crumpton, *The New Media Reader*, 405–406.
117 "A Thousand Plateaus I - Deleuze at Paris 8 (Video Links), Lecture 07, 3 February 1976."
118 Deleuze, Guattari, and Deleuze, *Mille Plateaux*, 31–32; my translation.
119 Haiven, *Revenge Capitalism: The Ghosts of Empire, the Demons of Capital, and the Settling of Unpayable Debts*, 177,191.

terms with the repressive war machines wedged by capitalism into every fold of existence and imagination."[120] Focusing on the resentment of right-wing American white men, political theorist Wendy Brown points out that their violent anger is often stoked by a desire for personal payoff and desire for the return to an "ideal" structure where they always come out on top (e.g. MAGA).[121] In a more recent book focusing on the work of Max Weber, Brown explains that desires are often personal and unreasonable, and that the Left has been stuck rationalizing the mistake of the Right, while authoritarians and fascists appeal to the actual desires of the masses. She proposes that we "harness and reroute these desires" towards new ideals of support rather than exclusion.[122] Similarly, Renzi proposes that subverting desire can energize broader struggles: "Subversion becomes possible if one can redirect desire away from the social reproduction of the producers of surplus value for capital. In these cases, desire produces movements; it becomes part of that energy that often drives cycles of struggles."

5. Actually Existing *End of Radio*

In computing, quines are toy programs that simply output their source code. They are sometimes called self-reproducing programs.[123] This is an apt way to understand what this project is truly about. With *End of Radio*, the goals I had for myself were to deepen my understanding of the politics of computation, get acquainted with Marxist autonomist theory, and read more of Deleuze and Guattari. The outcome was always in flux, always opaque, but never more important than the rest. The only thing I knew was that I wanted to end up with a flawed, earnest, creative *thing* which spoke to and encompassed some of this. *End of Radio*, which, it turns out, takes the form of a webradio, is this *thing.* But it is not the whole project. In more ways than one, the process is the project. I see this as a nod to

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120 Berardi, *Precarious Rhapsody*, 107.
121 Brown, *In the Ruins of Neoliberalism*, 174–182.
122 "Our task is to incorporate concern with desire into political thinking, action, and persuasion at every turn . . . How might we mobilize desire to live comfortably for building an order that supports rather than imperils life, both human and non-human? Brown, *Nihilistic Times*, 54–55.
123 From a computing standpoint, quines are also quite useless... What I mean is that they are literally only programmed to spell out their program. This recursive genesis is also a good way to think about *End of Radio*. It is also fitting that the word program can both describe computer software and radio schedule.

autonomist's use of radio while keeping in the scrappy spirit of using whatever's at hand. I should note that the webradio was both an outcome of my theme and a practical necessity.[124] That being said, I also think that radio really is a great example of cultural reproduction, self-valorisation, and subjectification. What I hope I surfaced in my research was that many aspects of autonomist resistance can apply to the general context of technology and the specific concepts of computationalism and cyberliberalism. The themes I touched upon (rationalism, order, desire, fascism, technology, collaboration) are all parts of this project, whether literally or figuratively.

5.1 Programming

End of Radio is broadcasting according to a program of my making, made up of music, interviews, lectures, and other audio experimentations.[125] The order of the segments is random and the webradio broadcasts 24/7. Keeping up with the ideas of Deleuze and Guattari, *End of Radio* is not linear at all. The program is also endless: it simply re-arranges itself and re-broadcasts them. My goal in curating this program was to put together things that had influenced my thinking, or were aligned with my position about technology and social justice, or that simply fitted a certain aesthetic I had in mind. My favorite aspects of the programming are the echos created by including certain things made or created by the comrades I interviewed: a music mix I had made for Conan, a memo I had recorded for Jess, a track from Markus... I believe it contributes to make the programming slightly more transcendent and multidimensional. (There are other, subtler connexions as well but they are too numerous to list.) I definitely wanted to have enough content to encourage randomly tuning in, and I started early to focus on quantity. In the end, I managed to put together 45 segments, for a runtime of

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124 My project about technology and social justice was initially supposed to take the form of a walk-in clinic to assist people in their woes with technology. For ethical and logistical reasons, this turned out to be harder to take on than expected. Then, up until January 2024, the project was supposed to take place at the Melbourne Institute of Technology through a Mitacs grant. Unfortunately, this idea also had to be scrapped for organizational reasons. The idea to use radio as a creative outcome for my project appeared out of these limitations but radio was never my primary research focus within social justice— technology was.

125 *End of Radio* can be listened to at https://end-of-radio.kuzyn.info

48 hours.[126] There is a creative element in the curation process, in trying to gently surface themes across multiple segments. There is also a creative element in recording and producing: there is about 11 hours of original interviews and original segments. The programming guide can be consulted online, on the webradio's page. Without spoiling the content too much, I will describe briefly the programming.

5.1.1 Interviews

The interviews are the most interesting and important part of *End of Radio*. In some ways, the other content was simply added to bulk up interviews. They were occasions for me to talk about technology and social justice with friends, comrades, and strangers. They were moments of subjectification, of resistance. I first interviewed two close friends (Conan Lai, Jessica Sammut), then a friend of a friend (Markus Floats), and finally two academic researchers (Alessandra Renzi, Art M. Blake). I attempted to interview Steve Albini and David Barsamian, and while both were very enthusiastic and encouraging, we simply could not find time to make it work. Each guest was asked to sign a consent form outlining what would be done with the interviews, and clarifying the "knowledge mobilization" nature of my project.[127]

While many more things came up in those interviews, it is useful to maybe give a rough idea of the themes that appeared. Conan and I discussed the endlessly re-composing fabric of n10.as, a Montréal webradio we both were involved with. One of the insight from that conversation was that cultural initiatives need to stay relevant to stay alive, and this requires a revolving cast since no one can realistically sustain a perpetual level of engagement with anything. This also came through my conversation with Alessandra, which focused on the power of subjectification and cultural reproduction to resist neoliberal and fascistic tendencies. Alessandra shared her firsthand experience with autonomist militant research methodologies, especially a tool "against and from within" academia. Art and I talked about the power of radio to empower marginalized communities and offer them cultural mobility. We

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126 Individual segments can be listened to at https://end-of-radio.kuzyn.info/files/
127 This form can be consulted at https://forms.gle/bPDvtEfzGgnvLfCJ6

also talked about the "superbowl channel," which is a CB channel used as a sort of gladiatorial arena. My conversation with Markus led to us to talk about the Montréal music as a vector for politicization, and how mutual aid spontaneously appears among the musicians, bookers, promoters, bar owners, etc. Jess and I talked about her own webradio project, Spacial Radio, which she started at the University of Arts London, as well as about workshops on feminist radio production.

5.1.2 Music

I wanted to create a musical program that acted as a sort of tapestry for the interviews and lectures, which made me pick mostly ambient and electro-acoustic pieces.[128] There are also certain aesthetic choices that I made. For instance, some of the music is a bit gloomy (Ólafur Arnalds, Kali Malone, Rob Lowe, Élianne Radigue), something I feel appropriate for a project about the cold hidden power of computation. There is also a sort of eschatological sub-thread: William Basinski's *Disintegration Loops* was made while the plane crashed the towers on 9/11; Tim Hecker's *Harmony in Ultraviolet* was made after he completed his PhD on the history of loud noises and left "the golden handcuffs" of academia forever. There there is a few segments that speak to the clattering and rhythmic nature of machines (Tony Conrad and Hangedup, 75 Dollars Bill, Mat Ball, Markus Floats). Richard Pinhas, leader of the experimental band Heldon, was one of Gilles Deleuze's students at Université Vincennes and can be heard asking questions during Deleuze's lectures. Then there are a few pieces with human voices, for instance Markus Floats' collage of Marx being read over a composition. There are two live performance of Fugazi, by many measure the most outspoken anticapitalist band of the 1990s. Finally, there are three mixes that I had assembled before this project began: a compilation of country music I had made for Conan in 2021, and two mixes of corny Québecois and Acadian country I had made for my friends and family. These three elements are my personal color, my own reproduction, my own reflection about getting in where I fit in: I love country and my family is from Gaspésie.

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128 The music appearing in this academic project is used within the interpretation of fair use and free radio broadcasting.

5.1.3 Lectures

The lectures that I chose for the programming similarly had themes going from one place to another, criss-crossing each other outside of a strict agenda. There are some threads about rationality and computationalism (Deleuze, Golumbia), about the power of Black imagination, and the importance of the LGBTQ+ perspective when fighting fascism (Henderson, D.G. Kelley). There are segments about the exploitation of workers under capitalism (Parenti, Ehrenreich), and new perspectives on how to fight against it (Drabinski, Doctorow, Spade). My goal was to platform talks and lectures that had a special impact or significance for me in the last two years. It was not meant to be a comprehensive or thematically coherent accompaniment of the research, but more of a showcase of its building blocks, returning again to the idea of a quine.

5.1.4 Other

Things labeled as "other" are speeches, recordings or interviews made by others, some of them commissioned by me some of them not. I contributed a recording of my own: a voice note I had sent to Jess about almost dying of a complication from strep throat last year. I also asked two comrades, Em and Sadie, to record something about their life. Sadie recorded herself going and coming from work, during a week that had been especially emotionally exhausting. Em recorded their findings regarding research they are doing for their own amusement about the Fruit of the Loom company. One segment is a 90-minute excerpt of *The Power Broker*, by Robert A. Caro. The subject of the book, Robert Moses, has often been used as an example of how "neutral" technical choices can actually formalize political projects. Then there are a few interviews that appeared on other radio programs (Boots Riley, Lavender Country, Cornell West and Richard D. Wolff, MLK). Among the remaining content, there is an interesting document: a vinyl recording of Malcolm X's program of Black nationalism, *The Ballot or the Bullet*, which was pressed as an LP not long after he was murdered.

5.2 Website and Streaming

Despite my initial ambitions, I have managed to keep the technical side of the webradio quite simple. I think that some choices I made, however, follow through with the axis of my research about technology. This was quite important to me. The audio clips were assembled and edited using Audacity, a free and open-source audio tool. They were then streamed out of a computer physically located at the ReImagining Value Action Lab using OBS and VLC. Both of these are also free and open-source software.[129] The stream is then distributed for free on the Autistici website, which is managed by "individuals and collectives of the autonomous anticapitalist movement interested in technology and active in the digital rights struggle."[130] Finally, the very simple and old-school webpage that displays all the content was put together by myself and is hosted on one of my (too many) Linux server. Overall, I am quite happy that from the research its outcome, as my project was able to carry on an autonomist "mindset," and stayed true (through some technical choices) to my value with regard to computation.

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129 A very strange quirk is that a small audio clip that I have collated to each segment to audibly separate them has been slowed down in the process. I cannot explain why and could not fix it, but it does not really bother me.

130 "Autistici.Org - Welcome to Autistici/Inventati."

5.3 Answering Two Questions, and Finally

The name "End of Radio" is a lark. I borrowed it from a Shellac song, whose singer and guitarist I attempted to interview.[131] The song imagines the very last radio transmission ionizing the air, after some vague apocalyptic cataclysm. By happenstance, the name and subject playfully echoed Fukuyama's infamous essay about the "end of history," proclaiming that the West had (finally!) perfected liberal democracy, mostly through the then-burgeoning neoliberal policies that were being rolled out in the US, UK, and Canada.[132] Fukuyama eventually nuanced his position, but I find the image hilariously beautiful. Proclaiming the end of anything is not something that goes un-noticed! Another axis of the gag is the trope, especially considering bands like Shellac or Fugazi, that "punk is dead."[133] Applied to radio, this became a sort of energizing mantra for the project, something I could lead my explanation of my project with: "Is this the end of radio? Is radio dead?" The punch of the joke obviously would then be to create a webradio, call it the *End of Radio*...

Radio is charged with potential for cultural reproduction. It is easy to consume and easy to create. It can engage people through many modalities, bridges the old and the new, the near and the far. There is a lot to be inspired from, all things considered. Radio has made it possible for Indigenous initiatives such as SOCAM and KuhKenah to connect people, literally and figuratively, according to their own terms. Communities and solidarities are cultivated around webradios such as n10as, Spacial Radio, and the workshops of Shortwave Collective. It all comes together in a fluid and continual cultural reproduction.

Now, the answer to the question "is radio dead" is interesting but hardly insightful. Let's say that radio is composting, always alive and always dying. I also need to admit that the gag made it easier for me to ask questions and, to be honest, actually put into relief the political arrangements that do exist in technology. For instance, interviewing Art M. Blake and reading his work, it was clear that radio

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131 *The End of Radio.*
132 Fukuyama, "The End of History?"
133 Or as David Bergman phrased it: "Punk rock died when the first kid said / 'Punk's not dead, punk's not dead'". Silver Jews, *Tennessee*.

waves had been parceled out and doped in accordance to some political goals, just the same as the interchanges of New York had suffered Robert Moses' bent touch. Invisible radio waves can ironically illuminate the abstract rational control that David Golumbia worked so hard to expose in technology.

I'd like to answer another question, the one about where do I fit in. My trajectory to and through this project is unique. I am the baby of a big family of interesting and generous and smart, hard-working people. Once I complete this project, I will be the first member of my family with a graduate degree. This was not a plan or a goal, it happened because I tried everything else. I have stained my hands in art schools, drawing pictures that no one ever saw. I have drunkenly moved from business lounge to business lounge, programming who cares what. I have gone from precariously in debt to maniacally well-off, and back again. And back again. While this project is modest, and scattered, it is also intentional. It is what I wanted and what I needed to do at the time. This strange project is how I fit in. Try as I might, I did not have the mettle for anything else.

This project is, in essence, a stand against fascism. It is not only that "everybody wants to be a fascist" as Guattari famously said, but that fascism is the original forever chemical. It does not wash off. It contaminates everything. Every day it rationalizes intolerance and hierarchies of power by leeching into our computers, into our phones, and into ourselves. Answering Hanson's idea of a garage being a project of fascist deprogramming, I'd like to imagine my project to be able to deprogram as well, if only by amplifying certain ideas about the world, about the future, about technology. Let's not accept that rationality is the answer for everything. Let's not take for granted that computationalism is unescapable. Let's understand that the order it encourages is accretive and directional, and most importantly, that it is not accidental. A radio program to deprogram.

Would I have had the fortitude, I would have attempted to follow Alessandra Renzi, Elise Thorburn, and other autonomist researchers deeper into *conricerca*—the tradition of militant and activist co-

research. I would have researched radio more thoroughly. I would have spent my time organizing. Instead, my project made me more of a subject than a researcher. In retrospect, it was an effort towards my own subjectivation. By engaging with readings and people, I find myself transformed and changed. I become an offshoot of the rhizome, a baby sprout. Coming short of conducting actual academic research, I hope this project is at least adjacent to autonomist social reproduction, and part of a broader effort to engage with others in creative and imaginative forms of radical resistance[134] After all, the threatening futures imagined by billionaires and technocrats is only as powerful as our incapacity to imagine alternatives to it.[135] As scholar of the radical imagination Robin D.G. Kelley explains, imagining different and better futures is survival work, especially in moments of struggle.[136] It is only by giving more power to our creativity and imagination that we can hope to break out of the oppressive structures on which we have been standing all along.

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134 Khasnabish and Haiven, "Convoking the Radical Imagination," 411.
135 Berardi, *Precarious Rhapsody*, 122.
136 Politics and Prose, *Robin D.G. Kelley — Freedom Dreams*, 17:30.

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