

DECOLONIAL HEALING*

In Defense of Spiritual Technologies

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Invocation

I call upon the remaining wisdoms of those who have walked the path we are walking to inform and guide us. May the forces of creation reveal themselves to us, through us, as us. So be it. So it is.

To invoke decolonial healing. To demand decolonial healing. To imagine decolonial healing. To manifest decolonial healing. To honor decolonial healing. To practice decolonial healing. To sing decolonial healing.¹

We breathe. We give. We struggle. We dream. We love. We fall. We resist. We dance. We care. We remember. We survive. We deserve. We trust.

I sing in remembrance of a time-space where data flows from the “cosmos database” to our inner information portals.² I sing in defiance to restore our lineage of scientific knowledge (Centerpiece.1). As considerable and crucial as all the applications of decolonial healing are; it is to harvest our potential for connection that these words are written. What is our collective state of connectivity? How do we connect? What do we connect to? From where? How does it feel?

* This chapter is based on a public lecture first given in 2016 at the CairoTronica Conference in Egypt, followed by presentations at the Royal Academy The Hague (2016); Willem de Kooning Academy Rotterdam (2016); Ramapo College (2017); Utrecht University (2017); Brighton Digital Art Festival (2017); Parsons School of Design Paris (2017); Kunsthal Aarhus (2018); and Sesc Belenzinho, São Paulo (2018).



CENTERPIECE.1 Tabita Rezaire, video still, *Premium Connect*, 2017.

Source: Courtesy of the artist and Goodman Gallery, South Africa.

As electronic networks swiftly replace intuition-based technologies, what effects do computing technologies have on our heart-mind-womb-lands? How can we retrieve ancestral knowledge as a weapon against modern/colonial imperialism?

By engaging with African and indigenous ancestral technologies of information and communication, we dare to reconcile the worlds of organic matter, energy, and electronics to nurture a mystic-techno-consciousness. So we sing to decolonize and heal our technologies.

To grasp the immensity and the responsibility³ decolonial healing demands, we must first apprehend the necessity and urgency of both decoloniality and healing in their singularity and multitude.

May this incantation soothe our burning tongues so that our words dance in ecstasy.

On Decoloniality

Decoloniality is the theory and practice of delinking from Western hegemony and Euro-US-centric systems of governance. Decoloniality is defiance against the West's political, economical, cultural, and epistemic (relating to knowledge and its validation) domination.

The term emerged from South America in the 1990s, yet decoloniality is as old as colonization, as people have been resisting the hostage of their lands-bodies-minds-dreams ever since. From the time sovereignty was first impeded, salvation ordained, then genocide inflicted, and indigenous knowledge condemned, there have been guardians of the ancient ways of living and being. From the seeds that

were kept, from the seeds that were planted in insubordination, we sprout to continue the missions of protection, emancipation, and retrieval. Thus decoloniality is not a mere thinking but a radical doing; it is a call answered to “delink from that overall structure of knowledge in order to engage in an epistemic reconstitution,”⁴ and recover from the violence of Western ideology.

It is not to be confounded with postcolonialism as some of us are still waiting for the post colony. Not merely waiting but fighting, imagining and creating the path toward political, economical, cultural, epistemic and aesthetic liberation. Indeed, although colonialism *per se* has legally ended, its living legacy is ubiquitous in contemporary societies. This is coloniality.

Coloniality is the colonial matrix of power that has been integrated and assimilated into the postcolonial social order. Coloniality in pair with modernity is the foundation of Western ideology, which has been used to legitimize its hegemonic domination.

The coloniality of power⁵ manifests as a set of hierarchies that define and organize social relationships between people, territories, and knowledge—with everything non-Western deemed irrelevant, illegitimate, or inferior. Inherited from the colonial enterprise, those hierarchies still rule our collective cognitive understanding today, namely the institutionalized hierarchies between people according to race, ethnicity, social class, gender, sexual preference, religious belief, body, and neurological abilities . . . with the urban, white, able-bodied, financially comfortable, heterosexual cis-man at the top of this hierarchy, making all alternatives to that fictional-historically fabricated “norm” somehow deviant and consequently inferior; 2018, this is the world we live in, where being Black, Indigenous, trans, homeless, Muslim, refugee, a sex worker, and/or disabled under coloniality means your life is less valued to the point where your existence becomes a threat and thus undeserving of the same rights and access, let alone of the same respect or compassion.

When our bodies are disposable, only valuable to be used or abused and our existences dehumanized, demonized, not meant to be lived. Yet we dare to thrive.

As the underlying logic of all Western modern/colonial imperialisms,⁶ coloniality also maintains a hierarchy of cultures, with European—North American cultures appearing to be the pinnacle of modern civilization—thus, justifying the hierarchy between systems of knowledge, with the West’s Christian, then secular, and now scientific paradigms as the sole source of legitimate knowledge.

Granting itself the monopoly on truth and objectivity, the Western world designed its supremacy by rendering all other knowledge systems illegitimate, vehemently showing contempt for African and indigenous knowledge. Disdainfully labeled as “archaic,” “primitive,” “naïve,” “underdeveloped,” at best exotic or good enough to entertain, non-Western knowledge systems still suffer from this stigma as this demeaning rhetoric keeps being disseminated through formal education and mass media. We live under the tyranny of logic, rationality, and dogmatic science.

Our histories, sciences, contributions erased, delegitimized, exploited, or appropriated. Yet in our flesh and breath remains the wisdoms of our elders.

The Wound

Here is the land of the wound.
We hurt. We hurt. We hurt.
We hurt. We hurt. We hurt.
We hurt. We hurt. We hurt.
We hurt. We hurt.

Repeat until it doesn't mean anything anymore.
Repeat until we can't feel it anywhere anymore.
Repeat until we stop spreading our hurts everywhere.

Coloniality affects us in all aspects of our lives, conditioning the way we think, feel, move, speak, dream, listen, desire, share, and learn. The way we love, who and what we love, and under which conditions. We are under siege, trapped in the colonial matrix of power. All wounded. All of us. All wounding. All of us.

Shame. Anger. Pain. Humiliation. Low self-esteem. Anxiety. Fatigue. Restlessness. Addiction. Stress. Depression. Precarity. Loneliness. Disconnection. . . . So do the symptoms of coloniality make themselves at home in our beings, in our siblings.

"When the world around is still sweating from yesterday's fever," said a friend to me. Despite the waves of decolonization of the Americas, Africa, and Asia—coloniality survived, and we are sweating streams. This is why decoloniality is as necessary today as it was then, if we are to thrive—all thrive.

Decoloniality is fighting the struggle against the West's control of our options of emancipation. This disobedient living scheme is devising tools to confront and dismantle the institutionalized oppressive system we live in and suffer from: white supremacist-capitalist-imperialist-cis-heteronormative patriarchy.

Decoloniality is a path for the retrieval of justice, a radical emancipation of the mind, body, and soul from the subordination to coloniality.

Decoloniality is a path toward healing.

On Healing

The wound is the land of healing.

To overcome the disconnection to ourselves, to each other, to the earth, and the universe mandated by coloniality, the healing we require is not solely physical nor mental but emotional, political, historical, technological, and spiritual.

Healing as Transforming

Healing is transformation, it's becoming, it's blooming, it's being home and whole within one- self in order to be home and whole within our worlds.

Healing is necessary to transform, grow, and realize one's full potential. To exist beyond pain, beyond trauma, beyond historical and political narratives, to become the spirits that we are.⁷

Healing as Unlearning

How can you be at peace with what and who you are when the world tells you that you are not worthy? To overcome that inner voice that says, "I'm not enough," is a struggle of resilience.⁸ This is our work against coloniality.

We have internalized so many toxic and harmful mechanisms of being and living, so to not reproduce how these mechanisms have wounded us, we need to unlearn them and let them go. Often the way we are, the way we behave, the way we talk to each other and ourselves is dreadful—that's because we have been taught to be as such, and because it's frightening for many of us to change and to break those automatic patterns by which we are wired. And possibly because we have come to define ourselves by our suffering, healing can also be terrifying. The unlearning we need is beyond historical narratives, but also on an emotional level—how do we deal with our emotions, how do we react when we are emotionally triggered, how do we communicate our pains? We must let go of what no longer serves us to make space within ourselves, our communities, our world for different patterns, perspectives, understandings, information. We need the courage and grace to walk the journey of self-respect, self-love, and self-compassion. When you operate at the vibrational frequency of love, then hurtful patterns, negative thoughts, doubts, and fear-based behaviors won't reach you; they'll just slide off you because you're up there. That's unlearning, and that's healing.⁹

Healing as Aligning

Healing means aligning. It means aligning with source, with your own rhythm, with your destiny and your vision. Often we are afraid. We're full of fears, full of doubts, full of insecurities, and we're unable to manifest our vision because we are broken inside. When you're broken you give birth to broken dreams. So healing is to allow a flow of infinite creative energy to move through you, with you, and for it to work *as* you. How can you be yourself, a body in service of the infinite? By aligning with soul. That's what healing is for me, right now.¹⁰

Healing as Listening

I believe sound birthed the universe. Literally. That sound is the creative force behind our manifested reality. Thus from the cosmic primal sound, all material

form—as in matter—was birthed and still keeps birthing. Everything has a vibratory frequency, even if inaudible, and this is the result of the primal sound, which set creation into motion. We are “only” sonic residues from our cosmic sonic beginnings. The human pursuit is then to find that sound and resound in that sound, so as to vibrate in unison with the vibratory frequency of infinity. This is the ultimate healing.

Healing is overcoming transgenerational trauma, is reprogramming DNA memory, is raising vibrational frequency, is shifting consciousness, is living from heart, is dancing until exhaustion, is disciplining the mind, is taking responsibility, is trusting intuition, is honoring our ancestors and descendants, is companionate loving, is listening to soul, while holding each other’s hands on the journey.

So that we may be whole, home, safe, enough, cared for, full, and loved as intended.

I am loved
 I am loving
 I am love
 I am loved
 I am loving
 I am love
 I am loved
 I am loving
 I am love
 I am loved
 I am loving
 I am love

Repeat until you smile inside.
 Repeat until you believe it deep down.
 Repeat again.

If decoloniality sets the relationship between the self and the world, healing reveals the inner relationship between one’s finite and infinite self.

Decolonial healing is a praxis of love in service of collective consciousness and liberation. It is a remembrance and honoring of the land, the heart, each other, and the wisdoms of those who listened to the unheard song.

Decolonial Trinity: Technology, Spirituality, and the Erotic

There are infinite rivers in which decolonial healing can flow, to nourish the soil of our hearts so we can bloom into who we were designed to be. One of these streams is concerned with information. How do we receive information? How

do we share information? What type of information is disseminated? Through which channels? For who to consume? At what cost?

We are constantly in communication with our surroundings whether we are conscious of it or not. Our relationship with our environments—both of the inner and outer lands—determine our sense of well-being; therefore, information networks are fundamental to our lives, as they allow us to access, store, transmit, and manipulate information to communicate and connect with the world. Yet our capacity for connection has been conditioned by coloniality. This is why it is crucial to examine the information and communication technologies (ICTs) made available to us (or hidden from us) to connect with ourselves, each other, the earth and the cosmos, and investigate whether a technology becomes another layer of oppression or a potential tool for emancipation.

What is a technology? One definition of technology is the application of scientific knowledge for practical purpose.¹¹ Here the tension lies within “scientific knowledge,” as the hierarchy between systems of knowledge imposed by coloniality only considers Western rationalist/ logic/“proven” knowledge as scientific. When you detach from these racist biases and allow other cultures of science to exist, then the meaning and scope of what technology can be expands radically. We have much to retrieve in terms of connectivity.

This retrieval is the intention behind this decolonial trinity¹² celebrating technology, spirituality, and the erotic—which has become a vehicle through which I learn and teach, guiding my political, technological, and spiritual journey, while giving my work a multidimensional grounding. Examining networks of information in the context of domination, this trinity creates conversations between electronic, spiritual, and organic realms, where various information interfaces reveal a multitude of knowledge portals. Whether through the internet, ancestor communication, DNA, intuition, atomic communication, teacher plants, sound, water, or the womb, the routes of knowledge migration are infinite, and we have access to a database as vast and profound as we allow ourselves to be.

The present offering investigates the cybernetics spaces where the organic, technologic, and spiritual worlds connect, to encourage a poetics and politics of epistemic reconstruction against manufactured amnesia. How can we use biological or spiritual systems to fuel technological process of information, control, and governance?

As electronic information and communication technologies become preponderant in Western lifestyles—rebranded “global” to further implement Western domination under the guise of a “natural” syncretism—we urgently need to understand the cultural, political, and environmental forces that have shaped them.

The mythology of modernity is one we need to dissect if we are to evaluate ICTs.

The ideology of modernity—as the mutation of the imperial-colonial systems of oppressions—allowed the Western world to place control over

subjectivity, philosophy, science, and the production of knowledge under its authority. The ethos of modernity grants only European cultures the credits to have produced information technologies. While they claim fulfillment through the “ultraconnected-smart-life” ideal, it certainly feels we have reached a limit—not to say the pinnacle of disconnection. The tragedy of these imperial global designs couldn’t be more evident than in the case of the internet.

Our beloved internet, as wonderful as it can be, is a central *dispositif* of coloniality.

The internet is a consciously constructed space where repression, control, and surveillance creates and moves capital to profit Western powers at the expense of the rest of the world.

Geared toward the erasure of all non-Western narratives, the web promotes occidental supremacy, brainwashes its users, whitewashes information, and is an active tool of propaganda and censorship. The machine of coloniality carefully crafted our dependency on this technology built to control not land as in the colonial days but to influence and monitor our minds, desires, beliefs, lifestyles, and consumer behaviors, through algorithmic processes, seeking to transform us into the updated colonial subject: a consumer and producer of data.

This is called electronic colonialism.

Electronic Colonialism is the domination and control of digital technologies by the West to maintain and expand their hegemonic power over the rest of the world. Ziauddin Sardar warned us in 1995: “The West urgently needs new places to conquer. When they do not actually exist, they must be created. Enter cyberspace.”

Electronic colonialism is one of the many ways colonial domination survived after its defeat. While settler colonialism was the policy and practice of acquiring, controlling, occupying, and economically exploiting land and labor—which by the way is still a thing it is just called capitalism now. Electronic Colonialism seeks to influence and control the mind through the digital device. It also operates by sustaining the dependency of former colonized countries on the West, by the importation of hardware, software, engineers, know-how, and information protocols. These create a set of foreign norms, values, and expectations that alter and marginalize local cultures, languages, habits, values, and lifestyles in favor of US–Eurocentric knowledge. Many countries in the Global South have become “electronic colonies” that are force-fed information generated by the Western world. Under the guise of globalization, the information revolution has become a vehicle for cultural Westernization.

The internet is exploitative, oppressive, exclusionary, classist, patriarchal, racist, homophobic, transphobic, fatphobic, coercive, and manipulative. The internet reproduces the West’s offline racial, economical, political, and

cultural violence and domination, legitimized behind the idea of modernity and techno-logical advancement.

The perpetrators of slavery and colonialism tried (and still try) to defend and justify themselves with the civilizing mission rhetoric: “We brought culture and modernity to the savages,” pretending their new trade routes were connecting to the new world. In reality all they did was to steal land, massacre indigenous population[s], [and] exploit resources and workforce[s] to increase the wealth of the Empires. Same story with the internet: multi-media giants claim: we are connecting people to each other, while underneath they steal and exploit our data, [and] our free labor to increase the wealth and power of their media empires.¹³

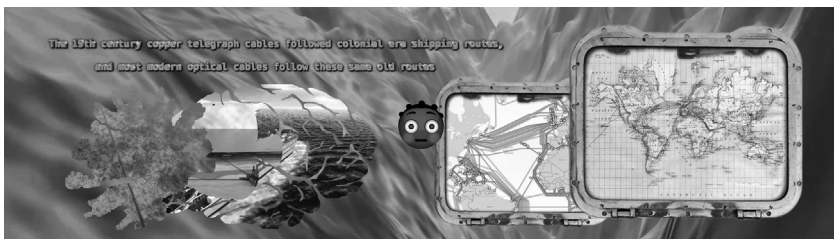
The relationship between the internet and colonialism doesn’t stop there.

Looking at the submarine fiber-optic cables that carry and transfer our digital data—embodying the physicality of the internet—it is striking to realize that these cables are layered onto former colonial shipping routes.¹⁴ The fiber-optic cable networks initially followed the routes of the All Red Line, the telegraph copper network connecting most colonies of the British Empire. Thus, the architecture of the internet itself echoes colonial architecture and geographies (Centerpiece.2).

Once again the sea bottom becomes the interface of painful yet celebrated modernity. Could the violence of the internet—inflicted upon Africa and commonly on Black and Indigenous people—lie in its physical architecture?

As our data traverse these histories, these waters in which some of our ancestors have rebelled, given birth, drowned or carried with them their sacred sciences and chants to other lands, we may also be given an opportunity to cleanse these routes.

From Atlantis, to the “Middle Passage,” or refuge seekers presently drowning in the Mediterranean, the ocean abyss carries pains, lost histories, and memories while simultaneously providing the global infrastructure for our current telecommunication system. Yet our waters do not only carry loss: our waters are fertile grounds, which have known many stories; remember, they came before Columbus.¹⁵



CENTERPIECE.2 Tabita Rezaire, video still, *Deep Down Tidal*, 2017.

Source: Courtesy of the artist and Goodman Gallery, South Africa.

The tales of haunting spirits, forgotten songs, and ancient navigations of our oceans can still reach us as water remembers. If only we listen. The research of

See Chapter 2 for Beverly Naidus's reflections on reimagining the Port of Tacoma with collaborators.

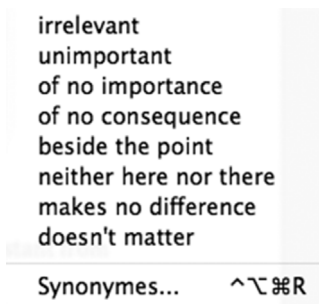
Masaru Emoto suggests that water has the ability to memorize and copy information, disseminating it through its streams. Water is a technology of information and communication. The most ancient hard drive.

Water has long been understood as an interface for communication between the material and the spiritual world. Throughout the African continent, the Americas, and their diasporas are cultures who still revere water as a conscious force. Inhabited by water spirits, mermaids, and sea serpents, and now submarine cables, water has always been used as a vehicle for knowledge transmission. The sciences of water, from libations, sacred baths, water offerings, and water healings, all harness the technological power of water. The resonance is beautiful: that both our digital network of information and spiritual communication networks have used water as a connective tissue. Our transoceanic networks of communication are vast and fertile; and abounding are the cosmological, spiritual, political, and technological entangled narratives sprung from water.

Opening to the worlds unseen, be they quantum or spiritual, allows us to expand our understanding and potential for connection. Within the immaterial planes of existence are subtle networks in which data flows: networks anchored in a mind-body-spirit consciousness that have been employed for millennia.

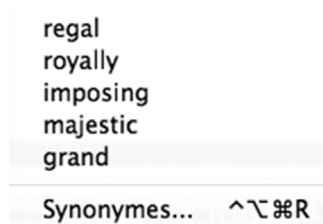
If our knowledge of the material world is scarce or counterfeit, what about the knowledge of the Unseen?

As I was searching for a synonym for the word immaterial, the synonym function in Microsoft Word gave me what you see in Centerpiece.3:



CENTERPIECE.3 Screenshot synonyms for the word “immaterial,” Microsoft Word, 2019.

This is coloniality at work, enforcing the supremacy of materiality. It may come as no surprise that the synonyms offered for the word “colonial” are what you see in Centerpiece.4:



CENTERPIECE.4 Screenshot synonyms for the word “colonial,” Microsoft Word, 2019

The violence of language echoes in our mind-heart-womb and affects the vibration of our thoughts, speech, and actions. It is crucial to retrieve meaning from words, which have been co-opted by the matrix of power, to deliver our tongues.

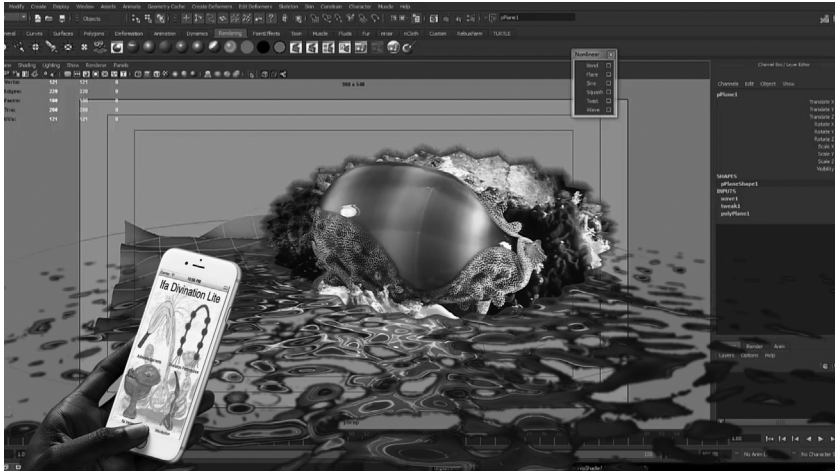
In the space-time of these pages I would like to honor the power and wisdom of the immaterial, the intangible, the unseen, and the ethereal realms, where profound knowledge is encoded, waiting to be revealed (Centerpiece.4).

The ancestral practice of divination is one that bridges the material and immaterial worlds by decoding omens as messages from the subconscious or world of spirits.

Divination is the art of accessing unknown information—the future, the hidden and the past. A divination system is a science based on an extensive body of knowledge, allowing to interpret cryptic messages. Divination methods differ but all follow precise procedures to retrieve otherwise inaccessible information.¹⁶

Divination is a technology of information and communication that has been used throughout all cultures and is still practiced in most regions today, in different degrees of institutionalization, to resolve personal or collective issues. These analogue algorithmic processes, which have been looked down upon by the West as superstition, may well share a lineage with our sacred computing sciences (Centerpiece.5).

The digital revolution, contrary to the Eurocentric-biased thinking, might find some roots in African spirituality. Significant research in ethno-mathematics attributes the origin of binary mathematics, which is the functioning principle of computing sciences, to African divination systems such as the *Ifá* system of the



CENTERPIECE.5 Tabita Rezaire, video still, *Premium Connect*, 2017.

Source: Courtesy of the artist and Goodman Gallery, South Africa.

Yoruba people of West Africa. This spiritual oracle uses a binary protocol of self-generated 4- or 8-bit occurrences to reveal the unknown.

Ifa is the traditional spiritual system of the Yoruba people. It is the repository of Yoruba knowledge. Ifa divination is the technology to access this information. It is told that the practice was given by the god Olodumare to allow communication with the divine when needed. Through the intermediary of a Babalawo (initiated priest), Ifa divination uses a complex binary protocol to obtain an odu—an octogram holding divine guidance—by throwing 16 seashells. There are 256 primary odus (from all possible shells combinations), which encodes the oral body of knowledge containing all Yoruba science, cosmology, metaphysics, medicine, and wisdom in poetic form.¹⁷

Poetry has long been used as a cryptic vessel for guarding the mysteries of life. It is common in African cultures that the cosmological story of creation contains different layers of understanding for different stages of initiation. The story on the surface may seem naïve or fantastic in its attributes, yet what often escapes outsiders or noninitiates is the deeper meaning hidden and encoded in metaphors. As the level of consciousness develops through rigorous initiation processes, the same

See Chapters 14 and 16 for artist-authors who reflect on participatory poetry projects.

smilingly simple stories unfold in cycles into complex storages for the secret sciences of creation. Hence a poem, proverb, tale, or story was often the preferred format to store, protect, and safeguard

profound knowledge, as it allowed the depth of its wisdom to be accessed only by those with keys to unlock the cryptic art of storytelling and metaphor.

The research of Ron Eglash made apparent the contribution of Ifa divination in the development of the binary code theory of Gottfried Leibniz, which is the basis of all digital circuits found in computers, mobile phones, mp3s, and electronic appliances.

That from the thousands-of-years old-binary system of Ifa, the premise of the binary code theory spread from Africa to the rest of world is far removed from the Eurocentric genealogy of science and all the fear-based assumptions surrounding African spiritualities.

This knowledge migration started in the twelfth century when the Almoravids invaded the Ghana Empire and got exposed to African divination systems. The Moors assimilated the methods of divination, and spread the practice through their empire. When the Spanish alchemist Ugo of Santalla translated divination treatise from Arabic to Latin, divination sciences—known as geomancy—were taken up by the Occultist elites of France and Spain.

In the thirteenth century, the study of geomancy inspired the philosopher Raymond Lull to develop his complex “logic machine,” and from Lull’s research, the mathematician Gottfried Leibniz develop the modern binary code in the seventeenth century, which would become the foundation of computing science. Thus, through the dissemination of Ifa’s divinatory binary system, the binary code essential to every digital circuit was born.¹⁸

In the rewriting of history lies potent healing,¹⁹ as by transforming the way the past was recorded, we reconfigure the present and open up new potentials for what can be dreamed for our future.²⁰ And so the infinite cycle of life continues. From birth to death and rebirth, so unfolds the circular cycle of life. Each of these stages is in conversations. This is one of the fundamental teachings of African spiritualities. The dead are not dead, they speak to us “in the trembling of the trees,” “in a woman’s breast,” and “in the moaning rock.”²¹

Ancestor communication is a technology of information and communication, enabling cosmic downloads, as the ancestors act as the intermediaries between the living and source.

We are praising our ancestors because also, what they provide for us is a divine record of consciousness. They are the divine internet. If we are trying to draw on our own personal files, within the memory of our own computer, then our access to information is limited. If we take that same computer and connect to the internet, a whole different thing happens. It’s the same computer, but now it’s connected to the internet.

The analogy is that we are the computer. That if we try to rely on our own brain to come up with all the answers that we are dealing with on a daily basis—especially in a world of oppression like this, in a world of unfairness like this, in a world of injustice like this, in a world where we see things being destroyed that we care about—then we are indeed lost, because all we have is our one lifetime. When we draw upon the lifetimes of our ancestors, it's like our computer is now connected to divine internet.²²

As interfaces between the spirit world and ourselves, ancestors provide us with an information network to connect and listen to the voices that sing all around us.

As Birago Diop beautifully writes in his poem *Souffles*: “Listen to things more often than beings, hear the voice of fire, hear the voice of water. Listen in the wind, to the bush that is sighing: this is the breathing of ancestors.²³ And everywhere, in everything, if we pause to listen and open ourselves to the subtle energies we’ll hear: “The breathing of the dead who are not really dead, of the dead who are not really gone, of the dead now no more in the earth.”²⁴

And they will tell stories, and they will sing songs, and they will guide our steps, for they have walked the path we are walking.

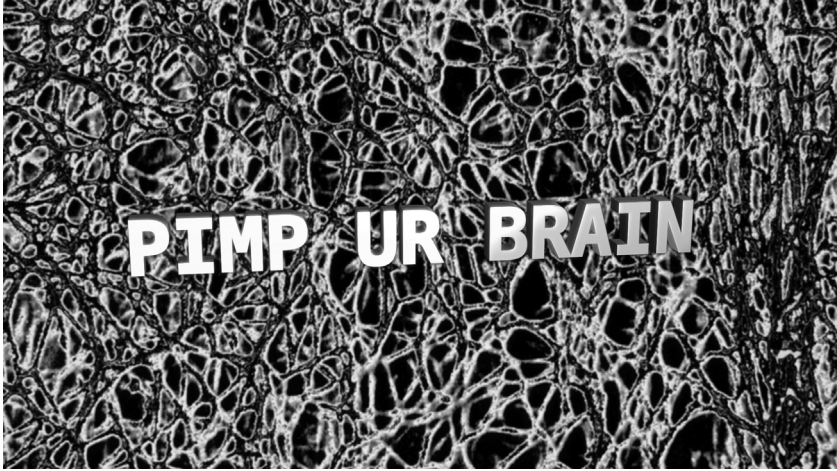
May we remember our ancestors; may we remember their names.

As they may use liaison interfaces to send their messages, there is nothing that doesn't speak. Plants speak. Humanity's relationship with plants is indivisible from its survival. They have been the guardians of our lives and allies of our growth as we depend on their photosynthetic ability. Our intimate and intricate relationships with the plant kingdom goes beyond solidarity in survival. There exists a deep collaboration and extensive information networks between all life forms, and people have learned from the vegetal world, communicating with plants since time immemorial, considering them as the living beings that they are. Only Western modernity separated human life from other life forms, in order to legitimize their exploitation.

Certain plants also work as portals into different awareness of reality. Entheo-gens—sometimes called teacher plants—are families of plants that contain psychoactive substances that once ingested induce an altered state of consciousness. Traditionally used in African, Asian, and Indigenous spiritualities and modes of governance to access information to guide their communities, teacher plants can bestow visions, cleansing, detoxifying, and guidance for healing and spiritual evolution (Centerpiece.6).

Under the guidance of plants, we are able to access another dimension, a vegetal reality,²⁵ where we experience the subtle layers of existence.

Plants also communicate among themselves. What has been dubbed the Wood Wide Web is an extensive network of underground fungi (Mycorrhizal fungi) that connects individual plants together from their roots²⁶ into a network and



CENTERPIECE.6 Tabita Rezaire, video still, *Premium Connect*, 2017.

Source: Courtesy of the artist and Goodman Gallery, South Africa.

allows them to share information and resources with each other; in exchange the fungi gets sugar from the plants. The fungi network acts as an interface for plants to transfer water, carbon, and nutrients, which creates a solidarity network between plants, as those growing in more favorable conditions can transfer resource to plants with less supply.

See Chapter 3 for Cesar & Lois's analysis of interspecies collaborations with fungi.

However, just as with the internet, where the network can foster beautiful support systems while upholding violence, the Earth's "natural internet" is not always benevolent. Indeed, the Mycorrhizal network can also be used by plants to spread toxic chemicals through the network to sabotage the growth of certain neighboring plants.

Vegetal or spiritual technologies of information and communication are not inherently less harmful than electronic ICTs, and their use is not to be romanticized. All technologies are tools that can be used to uplift or damage, depending on their user and usage. It is our responsibility to understand the complexity of the eco-politico-spiritual systems that support them, in order to identify their potential to hurt or heal.

From fiber-optic cables to water or plants, information interface is infinite. We too are an interface.

The human body is powerful. So powerful. We are a technology of information and communication, able to access, store, transmit, and operate information through our own inner data centers. This biotech runs on our life force, a subtle

yet fierce energy: the erotic energy. The erotic energy is our infinite creative potential. It is the energy of awareness, as the potential that resides within us to be aware of our infinity. Analogous to kundalini, qi, chi, umbilini, and tummo in different traditions, this energy is the essence of consciousness and can manifest the experience of infinity into our material reality.

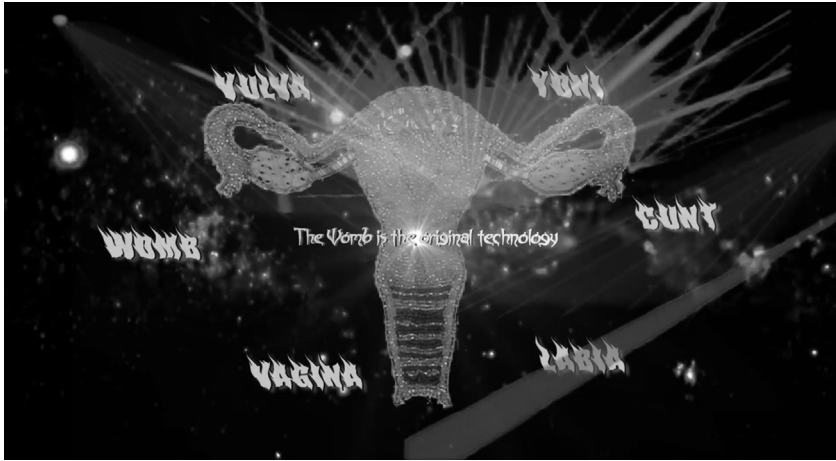
The erotic is our inner fire, our fuel, from which and with which we create in harmony with creation. Because it is so potent, the teaching of the erotic has been repressed as a strategy for mass alienation. As Audre Lorde taught in the *Uses of the Erotic*:

The erotic is a resource within each of us that lies in a deeply female and spiritual plane, firmly rooted in the power of our unexpressed or unrecognized feeling. In order to perpetuate itself, every oppression must corrupt or distort those various sources of power within the culture of the oppressed that can provide energy for change. For women, this has meant a suppression of the erotic as a considered source of power and information within our lives.²⁷

This is spiritual warfare concealed as political oppression. The apparatus of coloniality knows that our most powerful resource is our relationship with the creative energy of creation, so its mission has been to demean and condemn its wisdom. Each one of us is infinite and creative in potential but limited by our state of consciousness in this material reality. Our labor as agent of decolonial healing is to raise our vibrational frequency so that our level of consciousness awakens the seat of the erotic energy within us. Once awakened, we can harness this source of power and information and bridge the border between our finite self and infinite self. There lies the potential for personal and collective transformation and liberation.

The body is like an instrument that is playing inner sounds, our body's symphony or personal vibrational frequency, which is determined by the frequencies of our thoughts/intentions/words/conditions. We can tune our beings like an instrument to (re)establish the balance and harmony of our organic-cosmic symphony using various sound-based technologies, like chanting, recitation, music, dance, trans work, sound bath. . . . Sound changes the frequencies of your brain, igniting different endocrine/nervous functions, which change our states of consciousness (Centerpiece.7).

Learning the inner engineering of our body, we can unlock the reservoir of erotic energy and self-access different dimensions of reality to become a vessel for the cosmic flow of information. This bio-hacking praxis is resistance against the matrix that limits our experience of reality. As many before us, in celebration we reclaim the knowledge of the erotic "in our language, our history, our dancing, our loving, our work, our lives."²⁸



CENTERPIECE.7 Tabita Rezaire, video still, *Sugar Walls Teardom*, 2016.

Source: Courtesy of the artist and Goodman Gallery, South Africa.

The erotic is a teacher, a teacher of transformational teachings. Audre Lorde describes the erotic as “the deepest life force, a force which moves us toward living in a fundamental way.”²⁹ This fundamental way is life under the guidance of the soul.

Our soul bodies contain the whole universe, the whole of space-time.

We are literally made of space-time. When we truly access ourselves through the erotic, we access that cosmos database. Then we are connected to everything that has been, is and will ever be. It was using this network that telepathy was once widespread. Our communication with plants, the soil, the wind, water, fire, and spirits also use these channels once our bodies become the information interface that they are. We need to awaken to the subtleties of our different knowledge centers, as we don’t receive or share the same information from the womb, heart, brain, or chin.

See Chapter 12 for Christopher Blay’s reflections on space-time projects.

There is nothing that is not creation in motion. Any interface is fertile for spirit because spirit is everywhere, just waiting to be revealed to itself. The flow of spirit breathes in every- thing. It is in us, it is us. “Reality acquires its depth, and becomes the truth only by opening up to the expandable dimensions of the surreal,” wrote Léopold Sédar Senghor.³⁰ As real and surreal as we are, as our world is, if we are to reach political liberation, we need to anchor our struggles in the spiritual. The integration of social justice with spiritual practice is

indispensable for us to access our heart power and grow the visions of our collective destiny.

The dichotomy between the spiritual and the political is also false, resulting from an incomplete attention to our erotic knowledge. For the bridge which connects them is formed by the erotic—the sensual—those physical, emotional and psychic expressions of what is deepest and strongest and richest within each of us, being shared: the passions of love, in its deepest meanings.³¹

If our time has been called “the information age,” it seems that the edification of contemporary civilization has promulgated epic proportions of ignorance. This manufactured amnesia has removed us from our soul, breeding disconnection, injustice, and a materiality-centric fear-based reality. To this civilizational despair, modern technology appears like an answer to the angst of the Western world. Yet its longing to connect produced the least genuine forms of connection. How are we complicit in the institutional violence that our technologies reproduce? As we engage in the struggle for epistemic delinking, we remember that our responsibility, as in response-ability, our ability to respond to a situation, is the seed of our liberation.

Beyond the frenetic drive for growth motivated by profit and the insatiable thirst of capitalism are other worlds. Worlds we dream, worlds we draw, worlds we sing. Worlds where visions are real, where flowers speak, and water heals. Worlds we download and upload into manifested reality.

We walk on the ground of the visions of those who dreamed before us. May our walk keep clearing the path for those who will grow from our seeds, so they continue the labor of love. We have technologies that nurture collective growth. We have within ourselves, within our worlds beings, the codes for our emancipation, in 1s and 0s, in DNA helices and unheard songs. These soul-aligning technologies are our apparatus of decolonial healing.

May we thank and protect the land we are walking upon, honor our ancestors for the wisdoms they have preserved and the seeds they have planted.

As we channel the Song’s teachings, we water the buds of our revolutions.

So that we may find the courage and grace to be vulnerable and honest in our loving. May our hearts open to receive infinity.

So be it. So it is.

Notes

1. Today I sing from Cayenne in French Guyana, one of my ancestral lands. A land in the Amazon that is legally (still) a part of France. To this day French Guyana is the only territory on the South American continent not to be independent. So we keep singing.

2. Eleanor Ford, "Artist Profile: Tabita Rezaire," *Rhizome* (2018), <https://rhizome.org/editorial/2018/feb/01/artist-profile-tabita-rezaire/>. Accessed 1 August 2021.
3. Responsibility as response-ability. What is our ability to respond to any given circumstances?
4. Walter Mignolo, "Interview with Walter Mignolo: Activism, Trajectory, and Key Concepts," *Critical Legal Thinking* (23 January 2017), <https://criticallegalthinking.com/2017/01/23/interview-walter-mignolo-activism-trajectory-key-concepts/>. Accessed 1 August 2021.
5. The term "coloniality of power" was, for example, conceptualized by Aníbal Quijano (2000) and later developed by Walter Mignolo (2000, 2011, 2018).
6. Walter Mignolo, "Interview with Walter Mignolo: Activism, Trajectory, and Key Concepts," *Critical Legal Thinking* (23 January 2017), <https://criticallegalthinking.com/2017/01/23/interview-walter-mignolo-activism-trajectory-key-concepts/>. Accessed 1 August 2021.
7. Hatty Nestor, "Tabita Rezaire: 'Reclamation Allowed Me to Glow into My Blackness, Womanhood and Queerness'," *Studio International* (31 January 2018), www.studiointernational.com/index.php/tabita-rezaire-interview. Accessed 1 August 2018.
8. Alex King, "Feel Like a Cyber Slave? Meet Tabita Rezaire, Healer of Souls," *Huck* (1 February 2018), www.huckmag.com/art-and-culture/decolonising-the-internet-artist-tabita-rezaire/. Accessed 4 September 2021.
9. Jack Radley, "Truth // 'We Carry a Lot in Our Wombs': An Interview with Tabita Rezaire," *BerlinArtLink* (13 January 2018), www.berlinartlink.com/2018/01/13/truth-we-carry-a-lot-in-our-wombs-an-interview-with-tabita-rezaire/. Accessed 4 September 2021.
10. Brendan Stosuy, "On the Infinite Flow of Creative Energy," *The Creative Independent* (20 April 2021), <https://thecreativeindependent.com/people/visual-artist-and-healer-tabita-rezaire-on-the-infinite-flow-of-creative-energy/>. Accessed 4 September 2021.
11. Definition from *Apple Dictionary*.
12. The number three is of great importance in many cultures and cosmologies around the world. It is a generative number that fosters creation, resurrection and transformation as it overcomes oneness and duality.
13. Transcript from Tabita Rezaire, *Deep Down Tidal* (2017), <https://vimeo.com/248887185>.
14. Nicole Starosielski, *The Undersea Network* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015).
15. In reference to the book *They Came Before Columbus* (1976) by Ivan Van Sertima, which relates the ancient navigation of Africa to the Americas and the possible African origins of the Olmecs civilization.
16. Transcript from Rezaire's video *Premium connect*, 2017.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. It is important to stress that it is not its relationship with computing science that makes Ifa divination suddenly more worthy.
20. It is said that by healing yourself, you heal the seven generations before you and the seven generations coming after you.
21. Birago Diop, "Leurres et leurs," in *Poem Souffles*, edited by Birago Diop (Paris: Présence africaine, 1960).
22. Transcript from Rezaire's video *Premium connect*, 2017.
23. Birago Diop, "Leurres et leurs," in *Poem Souffles*, edited by Birago Diop (Paris: Présence africaine, 1960).
24. Ibid.
25. Roy Ascott (2000) speaks of the three VRs: vegetal reality (accessed and regulated through entheogens), virtual reality (accessed through a computer interface), and

- vindicated reality (our material reality accessed through the senses and regulated by the laws of physics).
26. It is interesting to note that the fungi are said to colonize the roots of the tree.
 27. Audre Lorde, "The Uses of the Erotic. The Erotic as Power," in *Sister Outsider*, edited by Audre Lorde (Berkeley, CA: The Crossing Press, 1984), 87.
 28. *Ibid.*, 89.
 29. Claudia Tate, "Conversations with Audre Lorde," in *Black Women Writers at Work*, edited by Claudia Tate (New York: Continuum, 1983), 99.
 30. Léopold Sédar Senghor, *Liberté 1. Négritude et humanism* (Paris: Le seuil, 1964), 245 (My translation).
 31. Audre Lorde, "The Uses of the Erotic. The Erotic as Power," in *Sister Outsider*, edited by Audre Lorde (Berkeley, CA: The Crossing Press, 1984), 89.

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