

Jazmina Figueroa **Infinite Whole**

Where to begin? I guess with 2020, and disproportionate affect¹ that settles and forms in sequence. Disproportionate affect, by design, plays witness to hypervisibility and involves everything that has led up to figures, measured.

These figures are numeric, unconscious, and compounded into reason—the analytical subject. The numbers are, then, processed into data. The data processed becomes a sort of neutralizer and negates any possible “consciousness of consciousness”²—or nuance. Decline is tracked, masqueraded as obscure forecasts, and data is understood as finite—when visualized in diagrams. Transmissions and chaotic consequences follow, in time. It is not an accident, the way numbers organize and summate loss. They can take form as anecdotes, for instance, revealing staunch disregard for life *sacrificed to the altar of capitalism*, tweeted in response to “[...]’only’ 0.02% of children will probably die as a result of schools re-opening. That’s 14,740 children...”

Failure and tragedy are manufactured, approximated. However, look to the enchiridion (in the making) as it is the groundwork for loss and exposure.

When my parents both started to have symptoms—dry cough, fever, loss of smell/taste—their doctor did not administer a test. “We are going to wait and see if the symptoms get worse,” my dad was told over a video call with his doctor. What a *fucking joke* of a healthcare system. Wait and watch as the symptoms get worse, I thought. They’re better now, but catching the virus more than once is likely especially if you are considered essential. Now that policy liabilities are so blatant, and hyper exposed, what will be revealed in *meshed systemic depositories* for when the next sequence hits? What *comes around goes around*, affect is unavoidable yet focalized.

With time and the passing of it, there was reconnecting. Proximity was, for me, a reproach and an expense. An abrupt shift from withdrawal, at first, where closeness was stimulating and exhaustive. A threat that puts patterns into perspective: front-lines, intimacy in decline, self (Whole), and its weight, bidding on... distribution, yearning/grasp³, care/aid, unequal and hyper attachments, abundance in loss, reaching out... in strain.

¹ Disproportionate affect is a term I use to describe precarious entanglements when determining certainties using data quantification models.

² “We ‘know’ that the Other is within us and affects how we evolve as well as the bulk of our conceptions and the development of our *sensibility*.” (Glissant, 27) I prefer knowing to be associated with touch and senses, knowing thus is embodied.

³ From an abolitionist perspective, Glissant’s reductionist tendency towards the structure of center and peripheral reads as a rejection of colonial/imperial influences, power distribution, and the systemic/institutional operations that uphold such structures: “The vague feeling that the end of the world had been reached, in the geographical sense, removed whatever element of adventure and perhaps blind belief there had been in the discovery of the other. Since the beginning of this century, the shrinking of unexplored regions on the map of the world has made minds less infatuated with adventure, or less sensitive to its beauty, inclining more toward a concern for the truth of human beings. Understanding cultures then became more gratifying than discovering new lands. Western ethnography was structured on the basis of this need. But we should perhaps see that the verb to understand in the sense of “to grasp” [comprende!] has a fearsome repressive meaning here.” (Glissant, 26)

With this, I could have dismantled all parts of the Whole. But instead, I stubbornly wanted to solidify. Realizing much later that: Nothing is solid and everything, as it should, “melts into air”⁴.

What is relative, in one whole.

Whatever’s absolute is material consequence.

What can shape itself in networks?

Taking part, connectivity is the result.

Interaction surveillance and data transmissions.

Tracking time and passage.

Linear sequences, inconclusive.

What stories can these numbers tell us?

Numeric interpretations of experience are protected by objectivity, while multitudes of information are rendered invisible until a mass Whole (sum) develops into a *disproportionate affect*.

Literally speaking, there’s no better time for outlining fault-lines, perhaps resequence—masqueraded as an unfolding. Connectivity, after all, is operated by invisible networks that are powered by electrical cables submerged into the bodies of water, on the ocean floor, and trace the shipping routes of the Atlantic slave trade. Synchronicity is something distant, evidence of time passing, steady past tangency—hyper-connected.

Figuratively speaking, what can one do with visualizing an individuation within data? Without the risk of becoming absolute. Assess the risk of self totality? Or reserve space for motion, water, maybe a mist, as forms forming, falling, and entropic. Anticipate poignancy, the density of connectivity, in continuation. “*Be water!*”⁵, protesters advised in Hong Kong last year. Now they are forced to vaporize... “*into the air*” to preserve autonomy from a state of hyper surveillance, being witnessed.

An article in a major US newspaper tells us, with diagrams, about the racial inequalities measured in correlation with the virus. The report references neighboring municipalities of my parent’s home, they cover the class groups and races in these areas that are disproportionately affected. “We just have to keep working,” someone states from this article. All while a sheath-like pressure tightens its grip on a disproportionate sum. A different piece in the major UK newspaper features sonic experts weighing in

⁴ A line from *The Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

⁵ Jackie Wang’s oceanic feelings as oneness and continuous movement.

on the effects of weaponizing sound by police departments in Silver Spring, MD—it all hits too close to home. The rootedness of these figures is hyper-present, crushing, and significant.

Numbers are expansive, they can be ubiquitous configurations or infinite. Figures, on the other hand, strive for totality. They are given capital, capable of *exchange* and sold off. Experiences documented and designed through figures, an effort in producing certain truths through incremental assessments. They can never be solid or absolute. To aggregate totalities⁶, is to negate indispensable information from in rage or *whatever affect*. Consider a hypothetical alternative, *counter-sequences* that are not linear, but oceanic. A liquid that is thick, moving, and murky. Use your imagination to abstract an ascendance from a figure, diagram, or data-set. Use submersion or evaporation, either, to go into—air.

My brother sent me a transcript of a prominent political figure speaking, “But the word experience is a very important word.” Then a sound bite with the same figure’s voice interjects the news story over the radio, “...what a great timeline that would be.” A few days later, I came across a recent headline from another major US news outlet that read, “Disappearance of COVID-19 data from CDC website spurs outcry.”⁷

Necropolitics⁸, particularly the right to kill, is what numbers circulate. Absolute distinctions release past revenants as figures, as well—like waves crashing on a shoreline then pulled back into the sea—into itself. Crunching numbers, en masse.

⁶ I am using the term totalities to consider what Glissant describes as the totality of relations in formations of European reason and worlds progress in chaotic movements, I also wanted to annex this thinking with Sara Ahmed’s alignments of others in her cultural politics of emotions: “The time came, then, in which Relation was no longer a prophecy made by a series of trajectories, itineraries that followed or thwarted one another. By itself and in itself Relation exploded like a network inscribed within the sufficient totality of the world.” (Glissant, 29)

⁷ On invisibility, obliteration.

⁸ My understanding of Achille Mbembe’s necropolitics (social death) in connection to abolitionist thinking of new potentialities has recently been revisited to examine and incorporate numeric and technological essentialism, in a recent interview Mbembe says, “The complex entanglement of the human and the technological so typical of our age has deeply transformed the ways in which cognitive processes unfold, how people dream and what kind of change they dream about, in short, how the political is configured and experienced. In assessing the qualities and properties of contemporary mobilizations, we must therefore factor in the impact of media technologies on the formation of political subjectivity.”

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