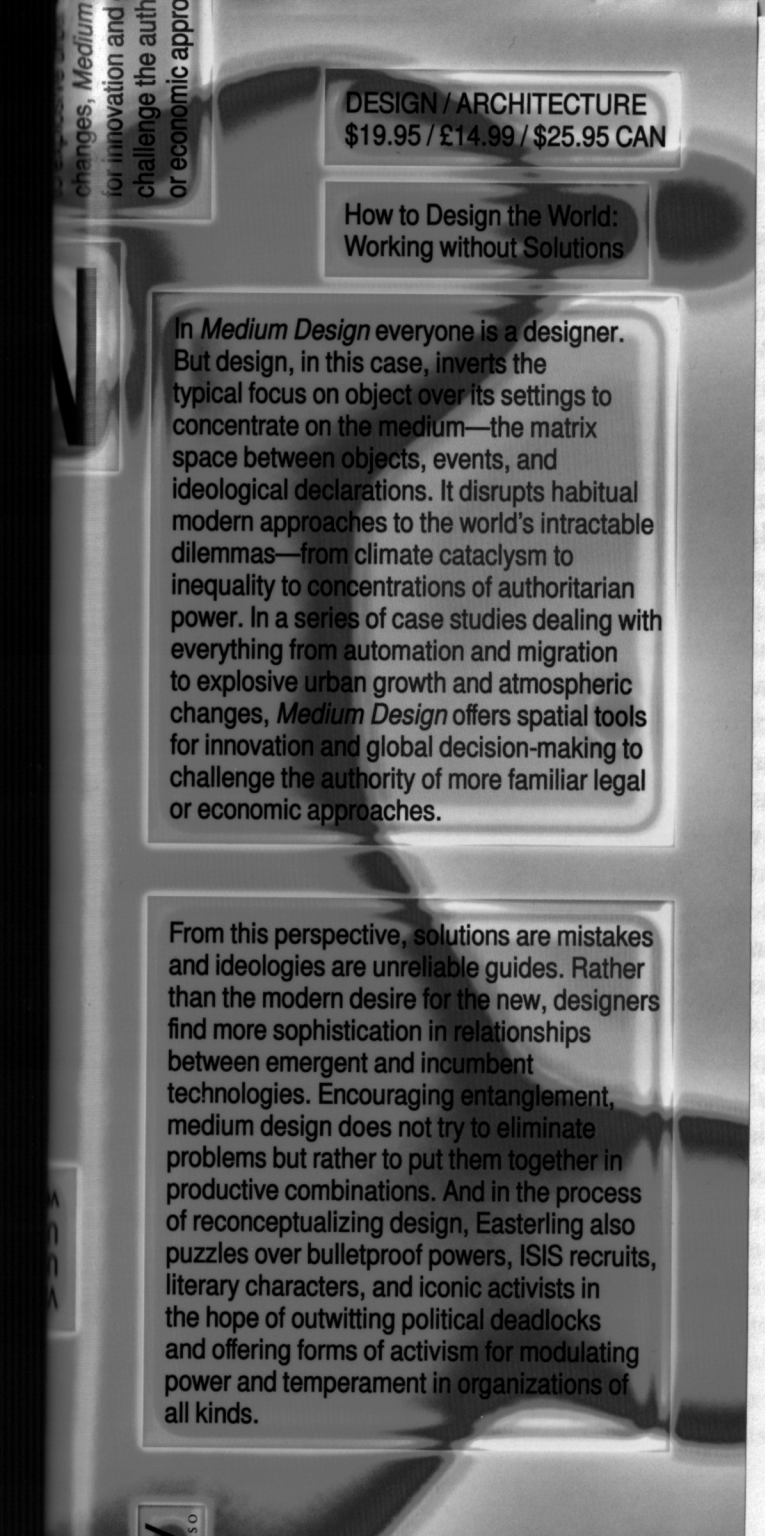


Introduction

Designing Is Entangling

Against all reason, some of culture's intractable dilemmas seem to create political, social, and environmental impossibilities—from unchecked concentrations of authoritarian power to organizational cross-purposes to extremes of inequality and climate cataclysms. Consider just a few of these as they are inscribed in spaces and territories.

While global warming is increasingly self-evident, it continues to attract naysayers.[1] Typhoons, hurricanes, and wildfires have given the world a dramatic preview of some evitable and lethal effects, as scientists report that greenhouse gas emissions are accelerating like a "speeding freight train."[2] But governments around the world nevertheless defy global compacts attempting to alleviate the situation.

A global pandemic like COVID-19 is an X-ray of racial injustice and economic inequality as well as a rehearsal for climate catastrophe. Viruses, like atmospheric chemicals, float across national boundaries. They easily infect *homo economicus*. They cannot be evaluated without considering a complex of epidemiological, ethnographic, demographic, economic, and cultural evidence. Just as structural racism in the United States disproportionately puts people of color at a higher risk, many factors can exacerbate illness. Only a more robust interplay between sectors of community can deliver health and welfare. But despite repeated failures, regimes like the United States continue to use thin econometrics to address a biological agent and broken policing to protect whiteness and bloated wealth.

Other contagions carry their own forms of violence. Repeatable formulas for space—*spatial products* for skyscrapers, malls, golf courses, airports, logistical landscapes, and everything in between—now populate repeatable formulas for entire cities. And many of these are "free economic zones" that legalize exemptions from law, privileging the freedom of corporations and offshore finance so that they can operate outside the inconveniences of taxes or labor and environmental regulations. Sweetened with incentives and bathed in elaborate promotional fantasies, this massive, global, infrastructural installation of corporate capital is a major engine of inequality, labor abuse, and environmental brinksmanship. And it is rapidly generating a new layer of the earth's crust.

The same global infrastructure space has perfectly streamlined the movements of billions of products and tens of millions of tourists and cheap laborers in free-zone cities.[3] But at a time when more than 70 million people in the world are displaced —more than at any other time in history—somehow, there is no way to move a few million people away from atrocities surrounding political conflict.[4] And there are still so few ways to accommodate economic or environmental migrations. The legal, logistical, or spatial ingenuity applied to commercial movements is suddenly absent in these situations. The nation-state has a dumb on-off button to grant or deny citizenship and asylum. And the NGOcracy offers as its best idea storage in a refugee camp—a form of detention lasting, on average, seventeen years.

Exacerbating inequality and climate change, more and more people live in cities, but in peripheral areas that are increasingly less dense and staggering in size.[5] They house sprawling wealth as well as the precarity associated with disenfranchisement and migration. According to some predictions, by 2050, this mostly unplanned peri-urban development, now de-densifying more rapidly, will cover 3.1 million square kilometers—the size of the entire country of India.[6]

Preceding the financial crisis of 2008, there was ample evidence of increased risk from the repackaging of "subprime loans" that were attached to buildings in this sprawling periphery. But the financial incentives overwhelmed the certain knowledge of risk. In the global economic collapse that ensued, buildings all over the world visibly fell into ruin. The evening news stared anxiously at the individual home—the germ of this mortgage crisis—as it reported about increased foreclosure rates. But even as the market flooded with foreclosures, new housing was treated as a sign of economic confidence. At any one moment, economists and financiers regarded the house as both a positive and a negative economic indicator—an object simultaneously exacerbating and relieving financial crisis. These assessments were regarded not as irrational or addled but as sound economic science.

Driverless vehicles, traveling in platoons, promise to perfect driving, save fuel, and increase productivity. As is the case with the advent of many new technologies, from railroads and radios to cars and digital devices, this latest technology is treated as an ultimate or superior platform that should make all others obsolete. And digital data is treated as the only information of consequence. But, as has now become abundantly clear, even if fleets of driverless cars are used in lieu of transit, they will create unprecedented forms of traffic congestion—a smart vehicle in a dumb traffic jam.

Although very different in content, all of these dilemmas, together with the powers that preside over them, share an underlying political chemistry that reflects dominant cultural habits. The human and nonhuman entities involved—whether elected officials, construction companies, legislative bodies, or financial institutions—prefer to overlook information that disrupts the status quo or the habitual solution. Ideological narratives or other reinforcing group behaviors galvanize adherents even in the face of looming disaster, and the most extreme and impractical situations can survive. From within its

echo chamber, the prevailing power circulates only compatible or convenient evidence in a closed loop.

Then, given the desire for autonomy or supremacy, when the closed loop is confronted with extrinsic or contradictory information, it often retaliates with a binary fight against any challenge to that status quo. In the face of obvious failure, the organization assumes that its solutions and guiding logics were simply not applied with sufficient rigor. The loop was not tight enough. The group was not ideologically pure enough. The organization then circles the wagons and vilifies the nonconforming element.

The loop and the binary reinforce each other. Evidence of global warming, pandemics, structural racism, financial risk, or technological failure are conveniently deleted. Labor abuse and inequality are soft-pedaled so as not to intrude on the short-term financial advantages of wealth and power. And the worker who challenges the "free" trade of corporations, or the migrant who challenges the borders of the nation, is now deemed to be a contradiction that is the enemy of stasis and security.

The loop and the binary are difficult to escape when default cultural habits of mind reinforce its tautologies and false logics. The modern Enlightenment mind is still present and still replacing god with ideological constructs cobbled together into false wholes. Religions, philosophies, and political regimes mirror each other with different forms of ideational monotheism that search for the one and only—the universal, the elementary particle, and the telos. The narrative arcs of cultural stories bend toward utopian or dystopian ultimates.

Modernist scripts also fuel the binary fight, since to reinforce "the one," bombastic arguments must naturally ask for successive rather than coexistent thoughts or practices. They must wipe away the incumbent. The new right answer must kill the old right answer, and the new elementary particle must now parse the world. The new technology—from railroads to

digital communications—must replace the obsolete technology to create the one and only new platform.

And, still in a monistic thrall, each successor is portrayed as redemptive, transcendent, and liberating. The quest for an impossible freedom usually accompanies these heroic trajectories. Manichean struggles between false oppositions progress toward emancipatory perfection. Chains are shed as each new manifesto is unleashed.

Ur-enemies, like capital, must be comprehensively defeated. Political philosophies (e.g., Marxism) inspire what philosopher Vilém Flusser calls "textolatry"—pure adherence to a theory as the only path toward sufficiently sharp critique.[7] And the impossibility of total epic victory often encourages delay and retreat into narrower and narrower cul-de-sacs that can provide the comfort of autonomy.

But besides these obvious political ultimates, the modern world is one in which emergent ideas must be labeled "radical" or "post." It is a world in which developers of digital technologies long for the algorithm or Turing complete code that, readable across many machines, approaches the universal. It is a world that would take seriously Francis Fukuyama's comical claims about the end of history.[8] *Homo economicus* and Westphalian sovereignty are darlings of most histories. And even science fiction stories often assume the shape of a mothballed tragedy with heroes and struggles.

In all these narratives, mimicking religion or war, cultural change can only occur through combat or collapse. And the fight should build to a revolution or an apocalyptic burnout. These are the hackneyed plotlines of the "humanities."

In the most general terms, maybe the modern mind is addicted to a common, stubborn desire to be right or to "know that." In the earliest moments of development, adults hammer into the minds of children the need to provide the right answer, just as they themselves go to bed every night telling themselves that they were right all along.

Being right is structurally self-reinforcing—the loop par excellence. In a recent book about winning arguments, Stanley Fish quotes an exchange from Monty Python's "The Argument Clinic." Michael Palin, who has come to the clinic to pay for an argument, says, "Argument is an intellectual process. Contradiction is just the automatic gainsaying of anything the other person says." John Cleese replies, "It is NOT!" Unwittingly adding to the comedy, Fish uses the exchange to prove that he himself was right all along about the ubiquity of argument.[9] He can perpetually say, "There you are, you see." He will always be right about the fight that is essential to being right and the argument that is essential to ideation. Culture congratulates itself on the reasonable thinking that arrives at proofs of this sort.

And that same culture is susceptible to political bullies or demagogues who set themselves up as another modern replacement for god offering the drug of being right to their following. Some of these entities, whether individuals or organizations, are political superbugs—something like resistant strains of microorganisms. Thriving on the oscillation between loop and binary, they can attract arenas full of supporters chanting in unison—supporters easily galvanized by a face-off against any nonconforming element.

Under the sway of these habits, culture then continues banging away with the same blunt tools that resist innovation. Shorelines flood due to global warming, diseases take hold, a financial crisis makes properties worth less than nothing, or a migration of refugees swells in number. If economic and military templates of causation provide no explanation, if new technologies provide no solution, or if the consensus surrounding laws, standards, or master plans provide no relief, little sense can be made of the problem.

The smartest people in the world can make brilliant observations of these dilemmas and measure all their dimensions with greater and greater precision. They can take comfort in being more and more right about their observations. But they are still

left standing with hand to brow. The violence and destruction that attends inequality and climate change can also become a matter of irrevocable nonhuman planetary or atmospheric conditions. And if you try to counter political superbugs with the pure dissent of enemies and innocents, you only deliver the fight that nourishes their violence.

How do you drop through a trapdoor to exit these dominant cultural habits, and how do you operate on the special powers of the superbug?

This would be the customary moment to announce a new right answer in manifesto form. But against everything culture holds dear, on the other side of that trapdoor, nothing is new, nothing is right, nothing is free, and there are no dramatic manifestos, ur-enemies, or universals. That conforming move, though perhaps labeled "radical," would be sadly conservative.

Instead, maybe it is only a little easier to see the world at a different focal length—to see, as if through half-closed eyes, a matrix or medium of undeclared activities and latent potentials. Through the very ordinary and practical perspective of chemists, cooks, and parents discussed in the preface, it is easier to see that whatever the content of each of the dilemmas described here, prominent above all is the tendency to form loops and binaries that obstruct change. That potential—that disposition—is itself the object of concern.

It is easier to see that ideologies, so firmly held, are often decoupled from what organizations are actually doing. A declared ideology and an undeclared disposition are misaligned. A populist ideology about distributed power and wealth is used to deliver power and privilege wealth. A global network of Dubai-style free-zone cities facilitates not its storied free trade, but manipulated trade. While flying under the flag of economic liberalism, a political platform maximizes the freedom of the wealthiest minority at the expense of everyone else's freedoms.

And both left- and right-wing ideologies can result in concentrations of authoritarian power.

It is even easier to see what the political superbugs are actually doing to survive. They use obfuscations and contagious rumors to create immunities. They appear to be brandishing ideologies when they are really conflating them or flip-flopping between them. Their lies, distractions, and confusions even seem to turn lexical expressions into physical force fields. One lie activates the rational restoration of truth. But the presence of many lies and distractions—too many to reconcile—begins to build up a Teflon coating on which rationality slips and slides.

The superbug's scrappy and inconsistent use of ideology is only the means to manipulate its real target—the undeclared dispositions and temperaments in culture. Whatever they are saying, all they are really *doing* is sowing division or garnering loyalties and keeping everyone locked in the old loops and binaries. The confusion helps them reinforce their following or make everything about a righteous fight between "them and us." And all this erratic activity, decoupled from content or declaration, further insulates the superbug from reasonable declarations or consistent platforms.

While activism may require ideological declaration and confrontation, undeclared activities can facilitate untouchable accumulations of power and environmental forms of violence. For instance, a sharp leftist critique of capital may be essential to understanding its special traps and contradictions, and yet an exclusively ideological view may fail to respond to myriad other deceptions, concentrations of authority, or sources of violence. And political activism may never succeed without operating not only on declared ideology but also on other chemistries of power that often remain mysterious, unexpressed, or underexploited.

But, most important to this discussion, on the other side of the trapdoor, it is also easier to discover opportunities to alter these chemistries or dispositions—to make them objects of

design. Moreover, since space is often the non-lexical carrier of dispositions like loops and binaries, design in a spatial medium can be an especially potent way of operating on or disrupting cultural habits. And, by remaining undeclared, this design can also offer stealthy or environmental forms of activism.

Designers have joined journalists, social scientists, lawyers, economists, artists, and others in exploring the globalizing world with all of its contagious and repeatable formulas for making settlements of all kinds. While it has been important to deliver evidence about violent and explosive forms of global development, reportage is not enough. Bored with another precise measurement or another rhetorical critique to be consumed within the venues of cultural production, this is a discussion about *manipulating* the spatial medium. A language of design in space is as legible and consequential as any other lexical or quantitative language to which culture gives authority. An understanding of spatial variables even expands what culture regards to be innovation, and it is crucial to anyone working on the world.

Luckily, design is something anyone in any discipline already knows how to do. As observed in the preface, to work with these potentials in ordinary space is to work within a cultural blind spot that is right before you and a *terra incognita* where you have already been.

Conventional design, it is assumed, must wait to be engaged by the market to prepare another right answer—a solution in the form of a building or a master plan. Alternatively, the critical design practitioner must work for the absolute defeat of this market. In both cases, the prescriptive, ideological, modern mind creates an all-powerful capitalism that is the chief source of opportunity or danger.

But the same global space that embodies the most toxic loops and binaries—the distended urban peripheries, rising seas, wildfires, and free zones—harbors many varied sources of violence, lethality, domination, and discrimination, and it

has special powers that inspire a very different kind of *medium design*. Direct political and legislative activism is crucial, even though it may advance slowly. But design work in space need not wait for either the revolution or the client commission. It can begin even now to act with what may, at first, seem like unlikely spatial material.

In this wetter, hotter world, a spatial medium presents not one enemy but rather many fronts and not one metric but rather many metrics—many sources of both productivity and danger that dominant markets often even discard or overlook. When ideological impasses obstruct change, medium design can trade in these alternative spatial markets where many forms of value and risk are immanent in the heaviest physical solids. Setting aside exclusive faith in econometric, informatic, or legal expressions, it can work simultaneously on multiple, varied, overlapping experiments parsed by many heterogeneous variables on many different platforms.

Aspiring to find the solution, declare the end of a problem, or establish stability once and for all often results in a denial of information or an attempt to keep circumstance at bay, but medium design treats solutions as weak positions that do not take advantage of all that space can do. They create monocultures, and they are especially weak in the face of stubborn forms of power, duplicitous political actors, and changing circumstances. Urban space is not a steady state, and any intervention can be gamed or corrupted, but medium design—like the superbugs—might find other ways to be resilient.

Rather than prescribing solutions, like buildings, master plans, or algorithms, medium design works with *protocols of interplay*—not things, but parameters for how things interact with each other.[10] For everyone accustomed to looking for solutions, these forms of interplay may be perplexing.

If asked to describe a field of objects placed before you in strong sunlight, you are likely to note the shape or color of the objects rather than the shifting patterns light stretching

between the objects. And you might not ask for more time to observe a cycle of changes before replying.

Transposing from a nominative to an active register, the intent of designing interplay is not to fix positions but to initiate interactivity—to disrupt loops and binaries. There may be no single new technology or magic bullet but rather a shift in the relationships between things. There may be no single event but rather an unfolding gradient of events. The designer is then temporarily manipulating the *chemistries* of assemblages and networks.

Interplay can rewire an organization, set up interdependencies, or initiate chain reactions. It is the design of platforms for inflecting populations of objects or setting up relative potentials within them. It is less like designing objects and more like adjusting the faders and toggles of organization.

These spaces of interplay build another kind of resilience in the face of dilemmas, but, even when they deal with heavy physical components, they also offer a way to react expeditiously and achieve scale in urgent situations. Some of the replicating spatial products that are spreading rampantly around the world contain multipliers that, when reverse-engineered, have the capacity to amplify a change.

Nothing works, and to worry that things might go wrong is to miss the point. Things will always go wrong. There are only organizations with greater or lesser capacity to provide relief or productivity. And a time-released interplay—like a software that is constantly updated—might have both the practical capacity to react to changing conditions and the political capacity to respond to the moment when it is outmaneuvered. An interplay is a form that keeps working when things go wrong. It is even something that should not always work.

Returning to the political stealth of a spatial palette, an interplay is not an object with a name, shape, or outline. It is the shaping of dispositions and activities, and, like the work of the chemist, cook, or parent, it can remain undeclared. It

might wriggle between ideological binaries. It might even work persistently and impurely to confound political superbugs by using their own techniques.

Medium design would then be something like playing pool, where knowing about one fixed sequence of shots is of little use. But being able to see branching networks of possibilities allows you to add more information to the table and make the game more robust. In pool, you don't know the answer, but with great precision, you know something about what to do next. The balls are sometimes attached to known forms or rules of play, but the art of pool involves assessing their collisions. The player "knows how" to respond to a string of changing conditions over time with an explicit organ of interplay. Medium design, like pool, is *indeterminate in order to be practical.*

And because things are very different on the non-modern side of the trapdoor, just as indeterminacy is prized over solutions, entanglement is prized over freedom as a means to achieve more equitable rights and relations. Freedom from oppression—as occupation, discrimination, or slavery—can never be equated with confused notions of economic liberalism or libertarianism. Sidestepping some of these conundrums associated with freedom and emancipatory manifestos, robust organizations can rely on mutual obligation, checks and balances, offsets, and bargains. And interplay might distribute authorship and agency to many players or provide those players with a means to act where there is a will to do so.

This medium design may be a way to "get on with it" or work around the modern mind. And to that end, the first chapter, different from all the others in this book, assembles a relay of medium thinkers—analysts of sociotechnical networks, political theorists, media theorists, designers, artists, and others—to further rehearse those expressions of activity and disposition for which culture has a blind spot.

While managing these activities is an everyday practical matter, rare is the formal recognition of latent properties or potentials as carriers of information and consequence that should have authority in global decision-making. The chapter dwells on disposition in space until it is no longer so easily eclipsed by solutionist thinking. And as it hands off to designers, the relay considers interplay as an innovative form that can expand the design repertoire to serve both spatial and nonspatial innovation. Designing is entangling—the simple act of encouraging interdependence.

The four chapters following this initial set of contemplations each find fresh powers and practicalities in more and more non-modern inversions of default cultural scripts. Moving from the domestic and urban to increasingly environmental scales, each addresses dilemmas introduced above—from land use in urban peripheries to inequality, automation, climate change, and migration. Each also cumulatively draws from the content of previous chapters.

These four chapters are organized in four parts. The first part surveys a situation, while the second part considers shifted perspectives that medium design might offer. The third part models relevant examples of interplay, and it may sometimes read like a playbook tracking the changing sequential moves of an unfolding game. The fourth part considers the cultural narratives and persuasions that must also be designed to propel a change through culture. It may not be enough to mix new chemistries of space in the absence of these narrative catalysts that can also alter the physical contours of power.

To further nourish activist calculations, brief interludes between the chapters consider iconic episodes of political metastasis or remission that remain mysterious in part because of their underlying or unexpressed activities and dispositions.

Culture often longs for comprehensive solutions to perfect or defeat what it believes to be a single financial market of exchange. But in Chapter Two, solutions are mistakes, there are multiple markets of exchange, and the interplays that shape them should not always work.

Repeatable dwellings in the sprawling urban periphery are agents of inequality and climate change. Some are spatial products like McMansions, while others are precarious constructions of poverty.

Economic solutions may promise to solve urban problems by fulfilling the dreams of economic liberalism, but medium design considers multiple experiments and mixtures of spatial and financial variables—a broader portfolio of proximities, densities, morphologies, and situated relationships offering more tangible forms of exchange, risk, and reward.

Both historical and contemporary examples of interplay, rehearsed in projects around the world, begin to animate heavy spatial assets and values derived from arrangement. The examples offer safeguards and forms of resilience as they unfold over time and become more entangled in social, political, and environmental ecologies.

In a culture galvanized by visual evidence and quantifiable solutions, designs that operate on latent unfolding potentials may not initially have sufficient authority in global decision-making, however explicit they may be. But, precisely because they encourage interdependence, forms of interplay may even be behind the success of some economic approaches.

Interrupting the modern quest for the new and the emancipatory, Chapter Three looks for sophistication not in the succession of technologies but in the relationships, even entanglements, between technologies.

The contemporary digital ubiquity that sponsors new dreams of automated transportation often eliminates the information immanent in space in an attempt to be "smarter." When culture replaces incumbent technologies with new technologies, it often reaches for something regarded to be more sophisticated but returns to something more primitive. This habit works against the premise of digital architecture itself—that organizations are more information-rich when they are messy and redundant. Although it may be clear that the exclusive or pure embrace of the new and the modern makes culture dumber, the impure embrace of coexistent technologies is surprisingly less common.

The coexistence and interplay between emergent and incumbent technologies redoubles the material for design ecologies. The approach treats the physical material of space itself as a *heavy information* network. Potent and complex spatial variables do not need the screens and sensors of the internet of things to animate their stiff arrangements. They are already dancing.

The chapter considers switching interplays between low-capacity autonomous vehicles and high-capacity transit as a robust, diverse exchange between digital information and heavy information and perhaps the most plausible approach to the coming transitions in transportation.

Persuasions that accompany these interplays can expand and renovate the ways that culture characterizes innovation while reaching into popular culture to manipulate expectations associated with mobility. Inclusive of more than the digital, physical space may be an underexploited medium of innovation with the capacity to mix different species of information—technical, cultural, political—to be truly information-rich. And while switching between transportation modes is regarded to be an impediment to "freedom of movement," it may really be a release into the richness and speed of entanglement.

While problems are typically treated as something to be hidden, discarded, or redeemed with a solution, Chapter Four considers the productivity of multiplying and combining them.

Climate change exacerbates all the failures discussed in this book, but spatial assets facing environmental or financial failure can often be useful precisely because they have failed.

While the modern mind is deflated by failure, medium design exploits the potency of problems rather than trying to tame or solve them. Problems carry with them the potentials associated with needs and experiences. It is not even the content of problems but rather their interplay that is most important. Interplay can combine problems as raw materials to leaven and catalyze each other.

The interplays discussed in this chapter turn needs into a currency of exchange. They arrange urban castoffs in new ecologies. They even leverage climate risks to gain relief from those very dangers.

The cultural narratives that attend these interplays are about ratcheting changes that can quickly gain scale. And they envision a planetary network of failures and remainders—a terra incognita that is constantly renewed and explored.

While overt displays of violence attract the attention of most familiar histories, Chapter Five considers prevailing latent temperaments in organizations.

In medium design, organizations have an inherent temperament. In the same way that glass does not have to break to have a brittle disposition, they have a capacity to include, exclude, nurture, or harm, even in the absence of event or declaration.

The interplays previously discussed—about inequality, mobility, and climate change—all impact patterns of global migration. Rather than the drawn sword, the gunshot, or the military battle—all mainstays of historical narratives—global

migrations often embody what sociologist and mathematician Johan Galtung calls "structural violence." And humanities scholar Rob Nixon identifies migrations impacted by "slow violence"—the disproportionate damage and attrition inflicted by inequality that is also often accompanied by environmental, atmospheric threats.[11]

The interplays discussed here demonstrate the ways in which latent violence can work very differently from overt violence. Adding more inversions, in the medium design that considers temperament, joining a fight can be capitulation, and submission can be empowering. The final interplay considers climate change and migration together as the prompt for transnational forms of exchange and cooperation that bypass the ideological and diplomatic deadlocks over global warming.

Like the parent mentioned in the preface, design can adjust temperament and reduce violence in organizations, but the modern mind spins most of its cultural narratives around conflict and even sees peace as a corollary of war. Medium design replaces those tedious narratives with stories of migration as an adventure prompted by changes to the planet. This environmental exploration has no frontlines but is instead distributed everywhere—at the scale of both microns and atmospheres.

An afterword looks for special activist tools in superbug tricks and other mysteries featured in the interludes—moments when undeclared dispositions deliver political outcomes that diverge from expectations or declared ideologies.

Consider one such trick. During the 2016 presidential election in the United States, counterfeit social media posts used inflammatory racist rhetoric to incite not only political parties but social undercurrents. If focused on the injustice of a racist post, the ideological activist had no choice but to march in the streets to condemn this hate, and that activism will hopefully, eventually yield systemic change. But considered in terms of

disposition and temperament, in the short term, a binary divide helped to elect Donald Trump. The superbugs can convert dissent associated with an opposing ideology into fuel for their own engine.

Direct activist stances must remain resolute, but supporting and expanding this activist repertoire, design needs to be as good as the superbugs at both manipulating dispositions and telling contagious stories. Design can contribute to what philosopher Jacques Rancière has called "dissensus"—not the ossified consensus that is often the goal of power and the end of politics, but the destabilizing of aesthetic signals as they bounce through culture. Beyond declared intentions, works of art and design can shift political ground through the undeclared or ongoing activity they initiate under the radar.[12]

Interplays, or the narratives that accompany them, can neutralize a binary, take advantage of a multiplier, or find a means to leverage or switch a flow of potentials. The designs may make something contagious or generate a Teflon surface of their own. While not betraying an ideological creed, they may sometimes work on an undeclared disposition threatening that creed. They may offer an emotional message that has a surprising cultural bounce because of its inconsistency, irrationality, outrageousness, cuteness, or violence. And they may require a strong stomach for the impure narratives that nevertheless move toward greater justice.

Medium design is not a thing. It has no content. It is only an ever-present approach to many things—an expanded means to generate change outside of some dominant cultural habits. After taking a hard pass on utopian proclamations and master plans, some of what remains are extra-political and aesthetic capacities in spaces of interplay—the latency, indeterminacy, entanglement, heavy information, failure, temperament, and discrepancy that the modern mind abhors. It is an endeavor that may not be for everyone. Instead of seeking solutions alone, you can address dilemmas with responses that do not

always work. Multiplying problems can be helpful. Messiness is smarter than newness. Obligations are more empowering than freedom. Histories can expand to include latent dispositions as well as discrete events. And discrepancy tutors sly forms of political activism that might more successfully outmaneuver the world's most cunning superbugs.