<u>'This artwork is having a rest'</u>

'Critique of society is critique of knowledge, and vice versa.' (Theodor Adorno 1998: 250)

'For most of us, and particularly for men of affairs, for whom nature has no existence save by reference to utility, the fantastic reality of life has become singularly diluted.' (Charles Baudelaire 2001 [1855]: 15)

'That is why, through the exploration of knowledge, what I would like to convey to the reader is also a form of ethical experimentation.' (Isabelle Stengers 2010: viii)

The title of this essay quotes a notice that I saw recently, at the Tate Gallery, while visiting a retrospective exhibition devoted to the contemporary Greek artist, Vassilakis Takis. The artwork in question was a kinetic sculpture which was temporarily indisposed, its energy withdrawn into itself. Ordinarily, such notices might say 'out of order' or 'awaiting repair', with more or less formulaic apologies from the institution to the visitor on behalf of the absent artist. What, then, is the distinct 'atmosphere' created by Takis' work that might lead the gallery to make such an anthropomorphised announcement, instead of a simply pragmatic one? What of the playful or enchanting, distinct from the functional or informational, is suggested in this case? Of course, the opposition here is forced (as between 'facts' and 'fancies', to which I will return), for either kind of announcement, each in its own terms, would be equally descriptive depending on the context. But, in the Takis example, I felt somehow reminded of the scene in which instead of the curtain rising at the theatre, it parts slightly to allow someone – evidently not 'in costume' – to emerge and announce that one of the cast has been taken ill. In the theatre, a replacement is then announced, either to the delight or disappointment of sections of the audience – provoking different energies that open up or close down the flow of anticipation. In the case of an 'artwork', however, there is no substitute and the visitor's relation to time (whether in expectation or frustration) proves rather different.

The Tate's announcement suggests that there is a relation not simply between an object and its intended movement, but between an energy and activity; or between a mode of existence and its evidence – even, in this case, through its seeming suspension. Such a relation is the very 'material' of Takis' work and, while this particular part of the whole installation was not 'performing', the rest of the show went on – with Takis' artworks lighting up, creating sounds, vibrating, or simply floating, in the magnetic tensions for which it is famous. Ordinarily, we suppose that performance refers to performers, theatre to actors, dance to dancers, where the anthropomorphic appearance of these agents of an action seems to be a condition of and for those arts that are called mimetic; even (at least, in the context of Takis' work) when the ostensible subject of the activity is an object. However, as Diderot

famously discussed, the ambiguity of possible identifications between an inner 'motivation' of movement (or action) with its external appearance admits of profoundly different senses of the 'life' and 'meaning' of such arts.

Although the question of agency, or of performing, in the Takis example concerns an object, it is that particular kind of object called <u>art</u>; the kind of object that elicits (even in its distinction from theatre) movement – and emotion – in others, distinct from simply offering an immanent kinetic, mechanical, or automatic movement of its own. Such objects are ascribed the qualities of a person (an aura, even), in a mimetic process that has long been universally commodified by advertising. This transformation of one energy field into another – between moving and being moved – broaches corollary questions of reciprocity and responsibility for which one name, proposed historically by anthropology, is 'animism'.

On the face of it, this <u>work</u> of transformation or metamorphosis, in the name of art (or performance), suggests a distinction between animism and automation – a distinction that echoes in the referencing of machine energy in the industrial age to animals, with engines defined in terms of 'horse power'; just as the 'hands' of the mills were themselves reduced to this same abstraction by means of the machines. 'So many hundred Hands in this Mill; so many hundred horse Steam Power,' as Charles Dickens remarks in <u>Hard Times</u> (2012 [1854]: 78), before distinguishing the calculable capacity of the engine from the incalculable mystery of the person. In time, however, a new culture – and with it a new imaginary – of relations to both energy and work developed, now with reference to the laws of thermodynamics. As Douglas Kahn writes:

> Steam engines had been related to horse-power, the rate at which work was done, but the basis of thermodynamics went beyond comparing animals and engines to calibrating the inorganic exchanges of heat, mechanical motion, electricity, and so on. The convertibility from one quality to another led to the observation that nothing was quantitatively lost or gained in the process (in a given system), and that the overall amount of energy was maintained, albeit in different forms. (2019: 18)

In the work of automation (in contrast to the 'pre-modern' work of art), the world of magic is no longer extra-ordinary; neither animals nor aura 'explain' the new tools, which are understood (supposedly) in simply functional terms. The deception of this view – as if there were no ethical entailment in different modes of technology – becomes ever more apparent in the applications of an 'intelligence' that is still called 'artificial', reproducing the supposed exceptionalism from the organic of 'modern' humanity (as though it were not this very distinction that was itself artificial).

A ubiquitous image of the carelessness of this brave new world is the solitary motorist, parked in their car, leaving the engine running. Here the meaning of 'atmosphere' entails a field of relations in which 'nature' – the air we depend on for life – is regarded indifferently, while poisoning the miracle of breath. We encounter here what capitalism makes of humanity: the rhythm of thought reduced to that of an idling engine, with no sense of the reciprocal inspiration of others in the very possibility of living together. In the Capitalocene, 'the human brain has become

outpaced by the rhythm of the surrounding environment' – including now by what we call 'Climate change' – even though we persist in 'attempts to reconcile this encompassing environmental rhythm [whether that of digital capitalism or of Gaia] with our own intimate, internal rhythm of interpretation' (Berardi 2018: 53). The poetics of breath, evoked by Franco Berardi, are suggestive of what could be seen as a form of contemporary animism, exploring what it means to work <u>with</u> the environment, where life is understood as shared with others – whether or not they appear to be human.

Introduced to the history of anthropology by Edward Burnett Tylor in the 1870s, the concept of animism now serves as an index (together with its corollary, fetishism) for that very history itself. As George Stocking notes, '[s]ince the publication of <u>Primitive Culture</u>, the name of E.B. Tylor has been indissolubly linked with the concept "animism" in the collective memory of anthropology' (1971: 88), even as the discipline has distanced itself from the evolutionist frame of reference that accompanied its own development. No one today would use the term 'primitive', for example, without quotation marks – except, perhaps, when referring to the revaluation of its source culture, in 'grafting anthropology to the European avant-garde primitive' (Taussig 2019: 451). After all, as Johannes Fabian observes of the series of concepts 'savage', 'primitive', and 'traditional', that he 'took to be evidence of unwarranted allochronism' in anthropology: 'Radical critique should not make us forget that, like Rousseau's and Lévi-Strauss's <u>sauvage</u>, most of them were at one time also part of discourses that were critical of blind faith in reason or civilisation and of mindless celebration of modernity. "Radical" means going to the roots, not ignoring them' (2007: 23).

Unfortunately, this self-awareness rarely extends to politicians, who often resort to unquestioned conceptual legacies (some which have accompanied previous genocidal policies); as, for instance, Jair Bolsanaro disparaging indigenous Amazonians as 'prehistoric people' in his current pursuit of new mineral mining in what are – at least, legally – indigenous reserves (Phillips 2019: 25). By contrast, anthropology has become an enquiry into the very concepts that supposedly described its initial studies of the 'pre-modern' – not least, with respect to what Tylor called 'animism'. Understood as an analysis of religion without reference to divine revelation (just as psychology was to be understood without reference to souls), its study also opened the way to the social understanding of mentalities and practices (or 'rituals'), such as Durkheim's and Weber's. In place of primitive 'revelation', Tylor posited modern 'explanation' – especially in terms of 'experimental' analysis – with the world understood as reproducible according to the terms of a scientific or materialist rationality.

For Tylor, 'primitive' animism survived, however, in the spiritualism found amongst the moderns – that is, amongst those who had not matured into the new universal expectations of a 'scientific' world view, where (putting aside his early travels in Mexico [Didi-Huberman 2017: 29]) his own performance research concerned fashionable séances rather than the later expectation of fieldwork overseas (Stocking 1971). This post-Enlightenment condescension to the 'immature' – often frightening in its incipient violence – persists in conventional attitudes towards 'new

age' spiritualism and even, until recently, eco-activism. But, crucially, what such an account of animism ignores is the difference that Tylor's key epistemic concept – 'survivals' – makes to the history (and, indeed, the anthropology) of ideas (Segal 2015: 56-7). In Georges Didi-Huberman's account of the reception of this concept within a particular tradition of art historical research (where it admits the idea of the 'historical' as being itself in question), it exemplifies a 'theoretical and heuristic function of anthropology – its capacity to deterritorialise the fields of knowledge and to re-introduce difference into objects and anachronism into history' (2017: 26). This 'capacity' effects a displacement – a dethronement, even – of the Eurocentric subject of history and its epistemological presuppositions; not least, the chronopolitics of 'modern' knowledge (in which process is implicitly understood in the context of progress). That there are other histories of modernity is what, for example, decoloniality intends, as distinct from the ideological function of the prefix in 'post-colonialism'.

As George Stocking and Nurit Bird-David (amongst others) have noted, the paradox of Tylor's account of 'animism' is manifest in his original intention of calling the phenomena discussed 'spiritualism'. Wanting to avoid his account of the 'origins' of religion being confused with the contemporary (nineteenth century) practices – mixing both scientism and superstition – for which 'Spiritualism' had 'become the designation of a particular modern sect' (quoted in Bird-David 1999: 69), Tylor chose instead to adopt the term 'animism'. Indeed, it is from the understanding of 'modern' phenomena – of contemporary anomalies in modernity's supposed rationalist or positivist universalism – that animism was conceived, anticipating what Bruno Latour would so succinctly affirm: that, despite hegemonic claims to the contrary, 'we have never been modern' (1993). Importantly, Latour's book-length essay advocates what has proved to be a long term project (taken up, for example, in the exhibitions Reset Modernity! [2016] and, with Peter Weibel, Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy [2005]), the broader lessons of which are constantly supressed politically; that is, for a 'parliament of things'. This opens up the cosmopolitical implications of the relation between science and animism, as between knower and known, where 'the conditions that enable scientists to know, at least according to official protocols, are such as to make it impossible for scientists to be in the very world of which they seek knowledge' (Ingold 2006: 19).

Tylor's concept has been used as if it were evidence for the familiar progressivist vectors within which it was originally produced – from childhood to adulthood, from primitive to modern, with both vectors associated with that from savage to civilised according to the broader racist paradigm of colonial-modernity. Tylor's two volume work, Primitive Culture (dwarfed later by Frazer's multi-volume The Golden Bough, in which animism becomes part of a general theory of magic), aims to affirm its presupposition of scientific universalism, rather than its cultural and historical particularity, despite its own conceptualisation of 'survivals'. The historical framework of animism, then, delineates a vector from 'belief' to 'proof', from context to abstraction, where the first term is defined by the second rather than being understood in relation to it – posing a question not simply of the 'history of ideas' but of a contemporary cosmopolitics. The association of research dynamics to the

practice of abstraction – the reverse of the Tate Gallery notice with which we began – is fundamental to the context in which, paradoxically, the concept of animism was developed as its supposed opposite.

This is apparent in the reduction of the multivalent senses of the concept of energy, with consequences for the cultural understanding of 'globalisation'. As Douglas Kahn observes: 'Because the modern concept of energy is only 200 years old, is an abstraction grounded in extraction, and is mobilised to a planetary scale in mastery over both social relations and nature, it does not suggest itself immediately to Indigenous and traditional knowledge built over longer time periods concentrated in particular space…' (2019: 4). This mono-cultural concept of energy refuses the plurality of energies by which diverse understandings of the world are 'traditionally' explored or, indeed, animated. (Curiously, the exclusion of human being as itself part of a pluriversal understanding of the world – in order to access what is impersonally affective, rather than merely accidental – also plays into modernist aesthetics, with both Maeterlinck and Craig adopting an abstractive view of the 'actor' for the art of theatre (Twitchin 2016 [especially chapter 2]).) The pluriverse (as William James called it), on the other hand, admits of recognising 'animism' as coeval with 'science', rather than being simply superceded by it; indeed, it admits of a plurality of animisms, just as it recognises that 'science' is not one thing. Such a possibility, as Nurit Bird-David says, is to 'posit a plurality of epistemologies by refiguring so-called primitive animism as a relational epistemology. The perspective to be employed is presented not as more valid than any other but as one now needed in studies of the complex phenomena which Tylor denoted as "animism"' (68). As with the example of Takis, the question here pertains to what of both 'performance' and 'research' is already supposed when advocating its 'field' of studies – as, for instance, with the categorical distinction between 'bios' and 'logos' recited in Grotowski's reflections on body techniques in the <u>Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology</u> (Barba & Savarese 1991). Distinguishing between cultural conditions of and for expressive performance (traditionally conceived of in hierarchically valued terms), an underlying pre-expressive possibility is repressed in 'Western' dramaturgy. Intriguingly (in the context of animism), Grotowski suggests here that 'true expressivity, one could say, is that of a tree' (237).

As will be returned to (inevitably), the question of epistemologies is also one of power – which appears as if clarified when presented in the oppositional terms of the modernist legacy (even when these terms are revalued). As Warren Cariou writes:

> Traditional Aboriginal energy-use practices are characterised by what might be called energy intimacy, in which every community member necessarily has direct and personal relationships with the sources of their energy… This is the opposite of the contemporary Western corporate logic of energy extraction, which by its very definition is about taking energy out of its context, turning it into a commodity that can be circulated in a global economy wherein its value is guaranteed by virtue of its sameness, its uniformity. When energy becomes decontextualised and commodified, it no longer seems to be in a relationship to us, and therefore we cease to feel responsibilities in regard to it. (Quoted by Kahn 2019: 4)

One could replace the word 'energy' here with that of 'data' and these sentences would read in exactly the same way. As Shoshana Zuboff writes: 'Extraction is a one-way process, not a relationship… The extractive processes that make big data possible typically occur in the absence of dialogue or consent, despite the fact that they signal both facts and subjectivities of individual lives. These subjectivities travel a hidden path to aggregation and decontextualisation…' (2015: 79).

Here the concept of energy (as with data, to which I will return) offers an historical topos besides the usual one concerning subject and object in the Cartesian-Kantian heritage. Indeed, reference to this latter opposition (never mind that between self and Other) is constantly rehearsed in discussions of animism, as if what either term might mean (beyond the entailments of their opposition) was already understood. This is especially so when considering further oppositions, such as that between active and passive, which are taken to be interpretative (or even explanatory) of it. Addressing precisely this, Theodor Adorno opens an essay on the theme by noting that: 'To lead in with reflections about subject and object raises the difficulty of stating what exactly the topic of discussion should be. The terms are patently equivocal' (1998: 245). In a typically acute observation, he then observes that: 'The determination of their meanings requires reflection on the very thing the act of defining truncates for the sake of conceptual manageability' (1998: 246). The act of defining, in curtailing possibilities 'for the sake of argument', particularly when the positions of others are defined for them not by them, is itself an exercise in the meaning of power, for which the history of thought (as, for example, with Socrates) offers more than enough evidence.

As an example of its conceptual multivalency, the becoming 'power' of energies (defined as if they were not in reciprocal belonging) makes of animism something of a modernist fairy tale in and for the 'West'. The conjunction of the industrial and the imperial (already recognised as 'neo-colonialism' by Kwame Nkrumah at the very moment of African independence) was long anticipated in the European colonial extraction of labour power in the form of slavery (never mind horse power) that founded a global economy in commodities – first in agricultural products (with plantations) and later in industrial products (with factories). What Anibal Quijano called the colonial-modern power matrix is now metastasising in the digital realm through the added 'value' of surveillance (Zuboff 2015) and the universal commodification of data through digitally mediated interaction (with the Internet).

Whether or not the phenomena which the concept ostensibly described actually occurred in that form, animism was a contemporary alternative to the globalising 'world' of industrialisation, analysed already in 1848 by Marx in the <u>Communist Manifesto</u> (Twitchin 2019). And just as with commodity fetishism, it is tempting today to see dynamics that could be called animistic at play in the Internet of Things. Indeed, as is manifest in Spiritualism (or subsequently in esotericism and the 'counter-culture'), the modern cannot be simply explained in its own terms, requiring the detour of 'other' terms that remain, nonetheless, of its own definition – albeit disavowed. No longer, perhaps, intertwining the modern and the pre-modern, the concept of animism still offers an alternative to modernist claims to universalism – and to what Latour calls its 'mononaturalism' (2004: 453; de Castro 2004: 466 &

474). In this context, the question of performance research – as, for instance, concerning 'bios' and 'logos' – becomes, again, one of cosmopolitics.

Tylor's promulgation of the concept of animism, as characteristic of the seeming anachronisms that are then devolved to the 'childhood of humanity', occurs at the height of industrial and imperial capitalism. It appears alongside the repression of 'childish' fantasies – or 'fancies' – exemplified by the teaching of Dickens' Thomas Gradgrind (a figure with echoes of James Mill, Jeremy Bentham, and Thomas Robert Malthus) and the attempted cultural Year Zero of 'Facts'. Indeed, Tylor himself celebrates (albeit highly ironically) the role that 'dogged superstition' has 'had in preserving for us traces of the history of our race, which practical Utilitarianism would have remorselessly swept away' (quoted in Didi-Huberman 2017: 32). In contrast to supposed 'facts', the social conditions of meaning-making – trans-generational, as well as inter-generational – are manifested not only in the understanding of 'superstition', however, but of fiction; not simply in cognitive terms but in the sense of why we <u>care</u> to read at all, even when exhausted by the proleterianising disjunction of work from life (Dickens, 2012 [1854]: 57).

In a chapter demonstratively entitled 'murdering the innocents', a school commissioner – 'a mighty man at cutting and drying' (Dickens, 2012 [1854]: 7) – famously asks the pupils at Gradgrind's school whether they would 'use a carpet having a representation of flowers upon it' (9). The young Sissy Jupe ('girl number twenty' in the class) replies that she would and is then belligerently admonished by the tutors. The paradox, though, is that Jupe is the realist in this situation, recognising what is 'in fact' at issue (albeit subject to what is 'really' at issue; that is, the abuse of power) in contrast to the fundamentalist positivists who want to define understanding for her. Flowers woven into a carpet cannot be crushed by 'people walking over them with heavy boots' (9), as the commissioner suggests – for 'they would be the <u>pictures</u> of what was very pretty and pleasant' (9, emphasis added), as Sissy Jupe observes. By eliding reality and representation – their facts occluding others' fancies – the rationalist fundamentalists deny the basic truth that the child (and the reader) clearly acknowledges: that fact – as much as feeling – may be the stuff of fiction (and vice versa). The paradox is that Gradgrind and the Commissioner are the animists in this nineteenth century scene – albeit in a negative reversal of its implications. Sissy Jupe's semiotic lesson points to both the later popularity of the detective story genre (as another corollary of what I am calling the nineteenth century's 'negative animism') and the application of modern linguistics within cultural studies (leaving aside the lures of Lewis Carroll's ever contemporary 'looking glass'). The will to extirpate ontology in favour of epistemology amongst the 'moderns' attempts to define its questions in terms of answers set within the bounds of their 'conceptual manageability' (Adorno, <u>op cit</u>.), which creative production – or invention – begins to unsettle.

The work of fancies in Dickens' Coketown (with its soul-destroying factories, whose 'smoke and ashes' turned the red brick buildings black [26]) could, then, be seen as a 'survival' within modern materialism also, relatable to Tylor's concern with 'animism'. It offers an approach to the imaginary of the age of industrial reproduction that shows a greater sophistication than that of materialism in recognising the

difference between an idea or image and its ostensible referent. That 'reality' is not one thing, defined by its denial of corollaries and comparisons, analyses and allegories, is often ignored even by those who make the disparagement of theatre a key to their celebration of 'live' art(s). How and why performance (and its research) 'works' is not, after all, reducible to 'soulless' facts or to a 'reality' that is neither semiotic nor (therefore) poetic; as if claims to 'the real' in performance obviated, rather than repressed (and thus reproduced), all manner of dualisms.

Perhaps one of one of the most famous examples of the nineteenth century fairy tale of animism – with its grouping of children, resistance to the mechanical, and the exploration of souls (as opposed to the self-image of an 'all powerful' modernity) – comes from Charles Baudelaire, albeit in a scene that retains a pre-industrial aura. In The Philosophy of Toys, Baudelaire writes:

> The overriding desire of most children is to get at and see the soul of their toys, some at the end of a certain period of use, others straightaway. It is on the more or less swift invasion of this desire that depends the length of life of a toy… The child twists and turns his toy… From time to time he makes it re-start its mechanical motions, sometimes in the opposite direction. Its marvellous life comes to a stop… at last he opens it up, he is the stronger. But where is the soul? This is the beginning of melancholy and gloom. (2001 [1855]: 203-04)

But where, indeed, is the soul [anima] in this story of time and desire, materialism and spiritualism, possession and dispossession? Where is the 'proof' that the child is not alone – or, more profoundly, not abandoned – in the 'objective' world, evoked in the fragility of the 'marvellous'? (An interesting comparison here could be explored with the world-wide Climate campaign organised by school children today, inspired by Greta Thunberg.) If, as Gradgrind insists, learning needs only 'facts', what then of feelings or relations (above all, for Dickens, of love and what he calls 'the heart of infancy' [327]) when confronted with 'mechanical motions'? The 'moral' of Hard Times is explicit in its concluding appeal to the reader – 'Dear reader! It rests with you and me…' (327) – as the inversion of Gradgrind's opening lesson that '[y]ou can only form the minds of reasoning animals on Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them' (3). Like the scene in Baudelaire, and with Tylor's evocation of animism, the novel is itself a refutation of the mechanistic world that it describes, evoking not the fact of things but their life, countering what Tim Ingold called the 'logic of inversion… within the canons of Western thought' (2006: 11), or what Frans de Waal has called 'anthropodenial' (2019: 50). By excluding anthropomorphism ('rooted in human exceptionalism' [ibid.]) when describing the behaviours of our fellow primates, we fail to understand the meaning of human behaviours too; that is, the fundamental mimetic relation with others in empathy. (This is the same lesson, even within his family, that Gradgrind learns hard.)

Where 'facts' preclude the personhood (or personification) of non-human entities (whether animate or inanimate, organic or mechanical), what becomes of relation, not least in the very work of art (whether of literature or sculpture)? This is to think of imagination not as opposed to 'reality' but as a concern for what reality might be or

mean in different contexts. The modern ambivalence concerning what were once conceived of as 'survivals' can also be seen (beyond the experience of reading) in the supposed 'omnipotence of thoughts', attributed by Freud to both the infant and the adult obsessional neurotic. (Indeed, Freud adopts the phrase 'omnipotence of thoughts' from one of his obsessional patients [1985:143].) Here both literary and scientific research confronts the modernist disenchantment of the world – and the 'beginning of melancholy and gloom' – with an understanding of its own imaginary (just as science fiction offers examples of its utopian and dystopian possibilities).

For the question is not to have presupposed that personhood is the exclusive property of the human or that individuation is a purely human capacity. This is to reduce the human – as 'subject' – to a mode of existence understood in opposition to objects, rather than as engaged in the interplay of 'points of view' (including those of 'other-than-human' beings [Hallowell 1960]); or 'perspectivism' [de Castro 2014: 467 & 470]). Such segregated experience is precisely what creative performance undoes, exploring the reciprocities of active and passive, for instance, rather than simply enacting (or reproducing) the distinction usually demanded of them. As Tim Ingold observes (amplifying his distinction between objects and things): 'Animism is not about restoring agency to objects; it is about bringing things back to life. It gives us room to breathe' (2015: 225). In Gradgrind's world view (lacking the ambiguity of Tylor's or Freud's concepts), objects are defined by utility and exchangeability – without magic and without soul. Lacking life they need energy to be applied to them to become animated – not just literally but also conceptually. Such energy would exclude desire (or 'fancy'), as if one were to rewrite Baudelaire's scene of childhood (or 'childish') curiosity with the formulations of Helmholtz, replacing the question of the soul with that of the fabled perpetual motion machine. For, as Anson Rabinbach notes: '[Helmholtz's] conception of labour power reveals no self-moving power, no social labour that is not at the same time a natural force. With Helmholtz work was reduced to a quantitative phenomenon subject to a system of mathematical equivalents' (quoted in Kahn 2019: 24).

Today, however, desire is the very 'object' of a universalising commodification, 'subject to a system of mathematical equivalents,' enabled by the unparalleled corporations that effectively monopolise the Internet. Algorithmic advertising becomes the means to renew the myth of the perpetuum mobile as its power of animation remodels the world in its own image. 'Machines [writes Steven Connor] are supposed to work on their own, for us; the Internet works on its own, but through us. It is perpetual not because it derives its energy from itself, but because all of its energy is derived from its users' (2019: 81). In contrast to Gradgrind's (and Tylor's) era, it now seems possible that automation will mediate between the animistic (or mimetic) and the world, with inter-subjectivity finally reduced to objectivity. This is a corollary of the transformation identified by Zuboff in the verb 'to informate' – 'Information technology alone has the capacity to automate and to informate' (2015: 76) – itself defined by 'the logic of accumulation' which 'organises perception and shapes the expression of technological affordances at their roots. It is the taken-for-granted context of any business model' (2015: 77). The more invidious issue here is not simply that 'information' replaces the 'soul' (in Baudelaire's story), but that

anticipatory and predictive informatics actually produce (and animate) a reality encountered in the digital environment. In this negative animism, it is not recourse to a shaman that can protect you from sorcery but simply a credit rating. Zuboff quotes a 2014 White House report: 'There is a growing potential for big data analytics to have an immediate effect on a person's surrounding environment or decisions being made about his or her life' (84). In her commentary on this, Zuboff writes: 'This is what I call the reality business, and it reflects an evolution in the frontier of data science from data mining to reality mining in which, according to MIT's Sandy Pentland, "sensors, mobile phones, and other data capture devices" provide the "eyes and ears" of a "world-spanning living organism"' (84-85). What was once conceived of, in Tylor's time, as 'pre-industrial' will have become, in reverse, an anticipation of a 'post-industrial' world.

A contemporary comparison with the disenchanted world of Baudelaire's example, then, would be the penetration of 'AI into daily life and the urban environment, paving the way to a neuro-totalitarian system' (Berardi 2019: 231). In Berardi's terms: 'The [socio-political] trauma will transform the relation between emotional and cognitive dimensions. The direction of this transformation is not prescribed; it is the stake of the future game' (232). How might performance research engage with this 'future game' in the name, perhaps, of 'animism'? That is, how might it engage with such modes of 'interpretation' – 'to translate from the language of inscribed material possibility to the language of signs and of communication' (235); of new 'fictions', perhaps? In respect of 'soul' (or 'spirit'), how is invention to be sustained as creative rather than simply exploitative? The fusion of these possibilities – invention and exploitation – runs apace, after all, where the work of 'transformation' is manifest in the pursuit of an entirely commoditised relational environment promised by the Internet of Things. (Interestingly, a recent National Trust study has noted changes in the meaning of words that once referred to 'nature' but which now designate the operations of the digital environment – as with 'tweet', 'web', 'stream', and 'cloud', for example [Barkham, 2019].)

This corporate ambition even extends to nursery-age children, according to a patent filed by Google called 'Gamifying Voice Search Experience for Children', extending the 'accessibility' of its Google Assistant beyond the literate mediation of verbal interactions. According to a report in London's *Evening Standard*:

> The tech giant is targeting... youngsters 'who cannot yet read words' by 'gamifying' the experience of looking up information, according to a European patent… [T]hey could summon the search box by popping colourful on-screen bubbles, and then speak the term they want information about, such as animals or sports. Bubbles would show the child that the device is 'actively listening' to them. Documents give the example that the child might say 'Giraffe!' before pictures and video of the animal are shown on-screen, which they could 'like', 'dislike' or leave comments on. The patent says that existing voice search features can be ineffective for children as they often 'do not know what to ask for' or 'pause when prompted to speak, and sometimes get nervous and stutter, which leads to inaccurate voice recognition and therefore inaccurate search results.' It adds: 'Aspects of the (patent) transform content

searching into a game-like experience that teaches young users how to search for interesting content.' (Blunden 2019: 9)

This rewriting of Baudelaire's example in a 'networked' world manifests the sublation of the erstwhile subject-object distinctions of industrial capitalism by means of what Zuboff calls 'surveillance capitalism'. If Google is providing the toys, it is because it knows where the soul is to be found; that is, in the child and its curiosity (or even, indeed, its desire). This is the new frontier of 'work', for which (as in the nineteenth century) regulation lags far behind the possibilities for profit.

In all this 'melancholy and gloom' (with the enduring negative inversion of animism), let us finally return to the resting artwork with which we began – as it may be seen to pose a question (whether or not acknowledged by Tate Modern) concerning what Tim Ingold calls the 'ontology of animism' (2015: 214). For Ingold, this addresses the becoming verb of 'things' that are normally simply designated by nouns (2006: 14), where 'life is not an attribute of things… it does not emanate from a world that already exists, populated by objects-as-such, but is rather immanent in the very process of that world's continual generation or coming-into-being' (2006: 10). Animism is 'not a way of thinking <u>about</u> the world but of being alive <u>to</u> it' (2015: 215), where it is not so much a case, for example, of the wind that blows, but the wind that <u>is</u> blowing (2006: 16).

How does the possibility of 'resting' evoke something akin to that 'energy intimacy' proposed by Warren Cariou (cited above), albeit in the environment of Tate Modern rather than an Aboriginal community? How do we recognise the 'life' of the work when, precisely, it is described as resting? With this example of an artwork – an ostensibly inanimate thing – we can understand both sides of Ingold's account of animism here (without the anthropodenial of simply reducing 'animacy' to 'projection'):

> Animacy, then, is not a property of persons imaginatively projected onto the things with which they perceive themselves to be surrounded. Rather… it is the dynamic, transformational potential of the entire field of relations within which beings of all kinds, more or less person-like or thing-like, continually and reciprocally bring one another into existence. The animacy of the lifeworld, in short, is not the result of an infusion of spirit into substance, or of agency into materiality, but is rather ontologically prior to their differentiation. (2006: 10)

Responding to Takis' installations in 1965, William Burroughs evoked their sense of 'thinking metal': 'And you <u>hear</u> metal think as you watch disquieting free floating forms move and click through invisible turnstiles – Cold blue mineral music of thinking metal – You can hear metal think in the electromagnetic fields of Takis' (quoted in Warak 2019: 257). There is a <u>work</u> of thinking, then, between the metal and 'you' in Takis' example. One could, perhaps, reconceive the projective and the animate here in terms of the actual and the phantasmal in Connor's evocation of energy at work, the energy of work, the energy for work – or, indeed, the energy to perform. In this possibility of animism, performance, like work (for Connor) 'is in some indissociable way both actual and phantasmal – for it does its phantasmal

work precisely in standing as the very epitome of the actual. If work is what machines do, then <u>work</u> also remains the word for what art is and does. But not the least of the perplexities attaching to the machinery of perpetuity is the perennial problem of what it means for it, and indeed for anyone or anything, to <u>work</u>' (2019: 82) – or, indeed, to <u>rest</u>.

{end with photo of the Tate notice}

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