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Glossary

Affronted class A class of workers whose jobs and social status have been made newly vulnerable by automation. We call them the “affronted class” because their authority and authorship of tech innovation has been compromised. Their previously secure positions in the technology and creative sectors protected them from occupational precarity, and they are enduring a painful period of cultural adjustment to it. (See Chapter 8: The Affronted Class.)

Covens of care Covens of care endure despite conditions of domination, violence, or erasure. “Covens have familiars, but are not necessarily family. Covens have covenants, but not binding contracts. From the point of view of networks of value extraction, they are an ever-receding hinterland that is never quite entirely tracked and monetized. They sit in the gaps and fissures of the logics of accumulation and anticipation.” (See Chapter 10: Covens of Care.)

Depletion zone Depletion zones are inhabited by already precarious peoples such as racial, ethnic, and sexual minorities, women, indigenous people, and migrants. They are critical sites where raw materials, labor, and information are extracted and rarely replaced. These zones are laboratories or experimental zones where precarity generates possible techniques of control that, if they “work,” become generalized. (See Chapter 1: Precarity Lab.)

Depletion economy An economic system that requires the material, psychic, bodily, spiritual, and social depletion of land, environment, animals, and people. Depletion economies export toxicity and precarity to sustain the enriched world.

Digital precarity Individuals, communities, environments, and zones that contribute the raw and processed material for digital technology become depleted and insecure in their bodies and lifeworlds. Technoculture produces toxic materials, behaviors, and economies that are exacerbated by the use of digital platforms, Big Tech’s capital, and the gig and undergig economies that enrich them.

Enriched zones Spaces whose resources, labor, and raw materials depend upon the extraction of “cheap nature” and culture from depleted zones. These

spaces, such as Silicon Valley, Seattle, New York City, London, and Shanghai, are often defined by thriving technology industries that deplete resources from within their territorial borders.

Experimentation “The process of conducting tests that brings together the experimenter/researcher and the study subject/object” (Fouzieyha Towghi and Kalindi Vora, “Bodies, Markets, and Experiments in South Asia,” *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology* 70, no. 1 (2014): 1–18). We discuss experimentation to think beyond methods of testing, but rather to think of resource-intensive “innovation” as a form of power that fractures populations into investigators and test subjects, into extractable and governable matter. (See Chapter 1: Precarity Lab.)

Extractive zones The word “extraction” emphasizes that a resource was *taken*, not given. (See also: Macarena Gómez-Barris, *The Extractive Zone: Social Ecologies and Decolonial Perspectives* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017)). When areas, land, regions, jurisdictions, and districts are emptied, with varying degrees of force and coercion, of resources, expertise, skills, people, and lives, we know we are in an extractive zone. In scenarios where something abstract is “extracted” – such as value from data – life is reduced to a resource for capital. We acknowledge that the use of extraction is an inadequate metaphor, and that such practices produce value.

Laboratory A place of labor, but where labor is subordinated to the task of elaboration. In the lab, there are consistent procedures, forms of regularity but not necessarily to produce a standard commodity, in the way that a factory does. The lab produces differences that can be tested, verified, stabilized, and that can become the prototypes for new forms of organization of some aspect of the world, be it the material or human world. The laboratory is not really always about the production of knowledge, the generation of new regularities that will be more efficient, more rational, more fictionless. Sometimes the lab seems to exist for no other reason than the desire to experiment on precarious bodies, to no end, and for no reason. The lab has no necessary relation to reason, to enact power simply as power. (See Chapter 1: Precarity Lab.)

Overcommons We coined this term to describe technocratic societies characterized by radical inequality, a class of people whose richly compensated labor is enabled by the precarious labor of others who perform both the “gig” work that results in cheap and convenient car rides, places to rent during vacations, and task labor, and those who do undergig work. This technocratic

overcommons produces the “undercommons” (Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study* (Brooklyn, NY: Autonomedia, 2013)). (See Chapter 2: The Undergig.)

Precarity Precarity is a state of being and lived experience of insecurity, loss of control, and unpredictability of one’s world. Precarity’s etymology is derived from Latin *precarius*: given as a favor, at the pleasure of another person (*OED*). Our work highlights the differential circumstances in which precarity arises, extracting resources from and implicating racial, ethnic, and sexual minorities, women, indigenous people, and migrants who occupy extractive and depleted zones.

Social safety networks Systems of collective resource-sharing and emotional support, often across geographical distance, that emerge under conditions of decreasing state support.

Spirals/the screw of exploitation We use the analogy and the figure of the spirals as a way to highlight the recursive, circular, and penetrative nature of precarity in relation to capitalism and techno governance. One form of precarity, say, housing insecurity, disability, or educational debt, results in other forms of precarity – leading to an enmeshment and cycling of insecurity that is almost impossible to escape from. (See Chapter 2: The Undergig; Chapter 4: The Widening Gyre of Precarity.)

Toxicity The spread of environmental harm and vulnerability in the depletion economy. Digital industries create toxic matter that spreads and latches onto all kinds of bodies, some more than others. It is both a cultural condition and a material state of being.

Undergig Cheap labor is a precondition of the gig economy, hence we call these workers the undergig. Undergig workers perform the often invisible labor needed to create the conditions of digital life for everyone else. Electronics production that extracts value from depleted zones and factory workers, and produces toxicity, often overlaps with the “global south” category but also exceeds it. Being female, poor, offshored, poor, and non-white greatly increases your chances of being an undergig worker. The undergig is post-territorial: white men in Europe and the US can find themselves in this “sunken place.” (see Chapter 8: The Affronted Class; see also Chapter 2: The Undergig.)

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