— Patricia Reed

THE END OF A WORLD AND ITS PEDAGOGIES

'Sometimes it is the truth of the possible as opposed to the actual that needs to be conveyed.'[1]

INSUPPRESSIBLE FRICTIONS

Every human lives in a world. Worlds are composed of contents, the identification of those contents, and by the configuration of content-relations within – semantically, operationally and axiologically. As spaces of inhabitation, worlds are made concrete through manners of doing and saying that affirm a coherence between its contents and the identities of its contents, as well as content-relations therein. The identification of the contents of a world and its relational configuration is what establishes frames of reference for practical orientation. Reciprocally, orientation delineates a space of affordance for practicable navigation. All worlds are models,[2] but not all world-models become 'worlds', insofar as worlds and worlding, in the sense evoked here, are bound to the criteria of inhabitability, which is to say that worlds are constituted through processes of localization. Serving as sites for life activities, the condition of inhabitability of worlds, does not mean worlds are hospitable, nor does 'affirming' a world require, or necessarily entail, moral agreement with its specific configuration. On the contrary. The endurance of a world is correlated with the degree to which its conditions of necessity (material and/or imaginary) compel, or more violently, force, members to affirm its configuration in practice, despite whatever dissenting attitudes may be held, such that worlds able to withstand and absorb such frictions are the most enduring. It is possible to be fervently against the premise of evaluating and organizing human sociality based on one's capacity for producing (increasingly arbitrary) surplus value, however, an overwhelming majority still have bills to pay. The conditions of necessity inherent to a world, are the conditions which establish a social perception of the inalterability of that world, despite said 'necessity' being relative to a particular world configuration, and not absolute.[3] This is how worlds self-referentially perpetuate a law-like structure of being complete, total, or 'naturally' thus. Nonetheless, all worlds eventually come to an end, and this end can be indexed by the inability (or inadequacy) of an existing world configuration to absorb frictions within it[4] – be those frictions onto-epistemic (i.e. the discovery or invention of new contents of the cosmos); normative or axiological (i.e. the semantic re-inscription of the contents, or the identities of contents of a world); or socio-material (i.e. the claims made in the name of inhospitable inhabitation).
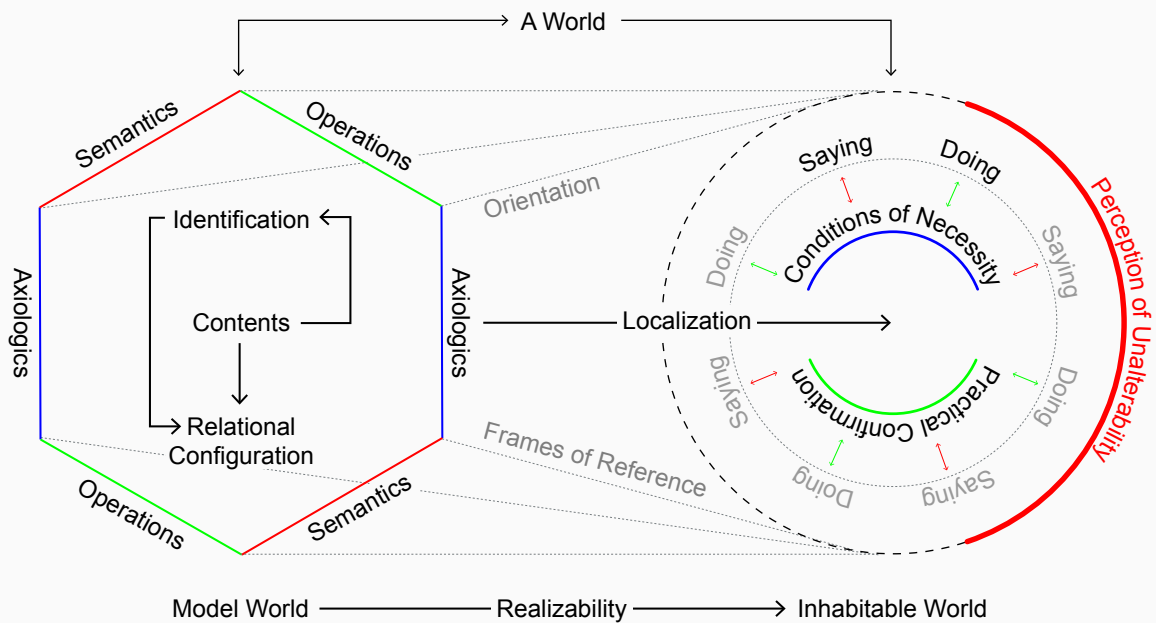
Diagram courtesy of the author.

Recognizing the threshold of insuppressible frictions germinating from within an existing world, are equal to making the incompleteness of that world intelligible. Correspondingly, to recognize the incompleteness of a world is to re-cognize its end. This is because every seemingly 'complete' world is underwritten by a particular configuration of futurity that legislates a degree of continuous dynamism within those futural parameters. The endurance of a world does not mean that the conditions of inhabitation within it are entirely static over time – to say that one lives today exactly as one did twenty-years ago would be inaccurate. However, the preservation of a world is maintained by confirming the concepts and narrative ideals of futurity that ensure its generic continuity through particular changes. For as long as those underlying futural structures are confirmed, even in so-called 'inventive' or 'disruptive' activities, the existence of futurity proper to that world will be conserved, and the degree of transformation therein can be registered as 'probable novelty', or what Anna Longo calls 'relative deterritorialisation'.[5] Recognizing the incompleteness of a world

is to comprehend that the genre of futurity proper to it (which limits gradations of dynamism) is no longer relevant, tenable, 'natural', nor is it desirable. The futurity proper to that world has effectively come to an end, imposing a terminal point on the possible continuity of that world. If every world is underwritten by axiomatic narrations of itself, as Federico Campagna suggests,[6] the end of a world is the discovery of a threshold induced by insuppressible frictions, where no further chapters within that world-axiomatic story can, or ought to be, written. Coincidingly, the end of a world is also marked by the irrelevance of its relative conditions of necessity, which concretize particular life practices and the encoding of relations endemic to it.

SMALL WORLD MONO-DIMENSIONALITY
The turbulence of orientation that arrives with the end of a world (where given axioms no longer provide referential certainty), can be expressed as a recognition of the gap between theoretical and practical forms of knowing. Correspondingly, the intelligibility of the end

World ———————→ End of World

Semblance of Completeness

Self-Referential
Preservation

Onto-Epistemic

Configuration of Futurity

Probable Novelty

Friction

Friction

Axiological

Socio-Material

Friction

Intelligibility of Incompleteness
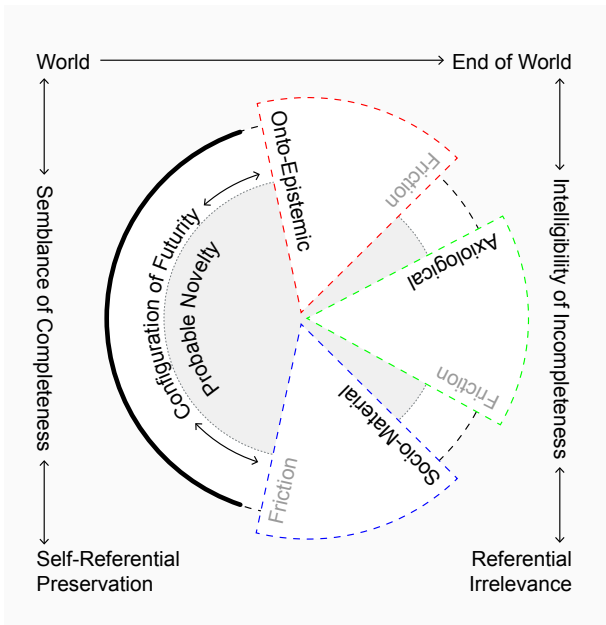
Referential
Irrelevance

Diagram courtesy of the author.

of a world is constituted by the capacity to bear witness from the geography of this gap. Currently, this gap is constituted by the friction between Euromodern,[7] globalizing practices (modes of concrete inhabitation), and the planetary (as a theoretical, explanatory model). We may know of the planetary, in so far as it can be named, but the practical, social ramifications of its sheer naming have yet to be coordinated or localized. In other words, the planetary has yet to be worlded. The discrepancy between globalized modes of inhabitation and a planetary (theoretical) condition can be succinctly captured in the following distinction: the difference between the making of a common world vs. the making of worlds in common. While the operations of globalization have been expansive, the conditions within which they have played out are driven by mono-dimensional tendencies: a single metric for the measure of value, one temporal model of futural betterment to gain admission into 'world history', the proliferation of agricultural monocultures, the human constrained by a 'monohumanist' behavioural template,[8] a single privileged 'geography of reason',[9] and so on. The making of a common world is coincident with 'the entropic tendency towards the elimination of the diverse',[10] at which point the genre of 'expansiveness', which is constitutive

of this common world, can be operationally understood as a systematic movement of making-small. While perhaps counter-intuitive, the making-small of a world is not a reference to the sheer scale of life activities constitutive of a global world, but rather to the narrow, monotone space of affordance for activity within it. The making-small of this world is predicated upon the construction of a uniform game-space, similar to that which Anna Longo has described in her account of the 'Global Game'.[11] As an economic derivative of evolutionary game theoretical accounts of historical progress, market volatility is justified as the necessary, 'natural' space for creativity and innovation demanding that players in the network continually adapt to new information (novelty), that, in turn, yield adjusted strategies of game-play to maximize their utility value, measured by 'nodal' weight within the network (that is, wealth accumulation, bending towards monopoly). The price of admission for agents in this game is the acceptance of 'far from equilibrium dynamics', meaning an acceptance of increasing risks (a threatening form of entropy) as a condition of necessity for entry into a global world.[12] Within such a small-world game-space, diversity is reduced to hollow shadow of itself – adjudicated by the modes of inclusion in such a world: entry is possible only on the condition of submission to its structurally unvarying, albeit partially dynamic, governing codes. The elimination of diversity (understood beyond the inclusive/exclusive binary underwriting the logic of the global game), also participates in the undervaluation of friction as an enabling means for the production of 'outer views'. [13] Such 'outer views', described by Sylvia Wynter, are not views from nowhere, but rather a comparative perspective which generates friction in the grappling with a double position in making claims that are irreducible to current concretized configurations:[14] that of the condition of structural implication, and that of destructuring dissociation. The undervaluation of friction impedes the possibility to witness the incompleteness of a world – a symptom of this can often be seen in the undifferentiated account of the
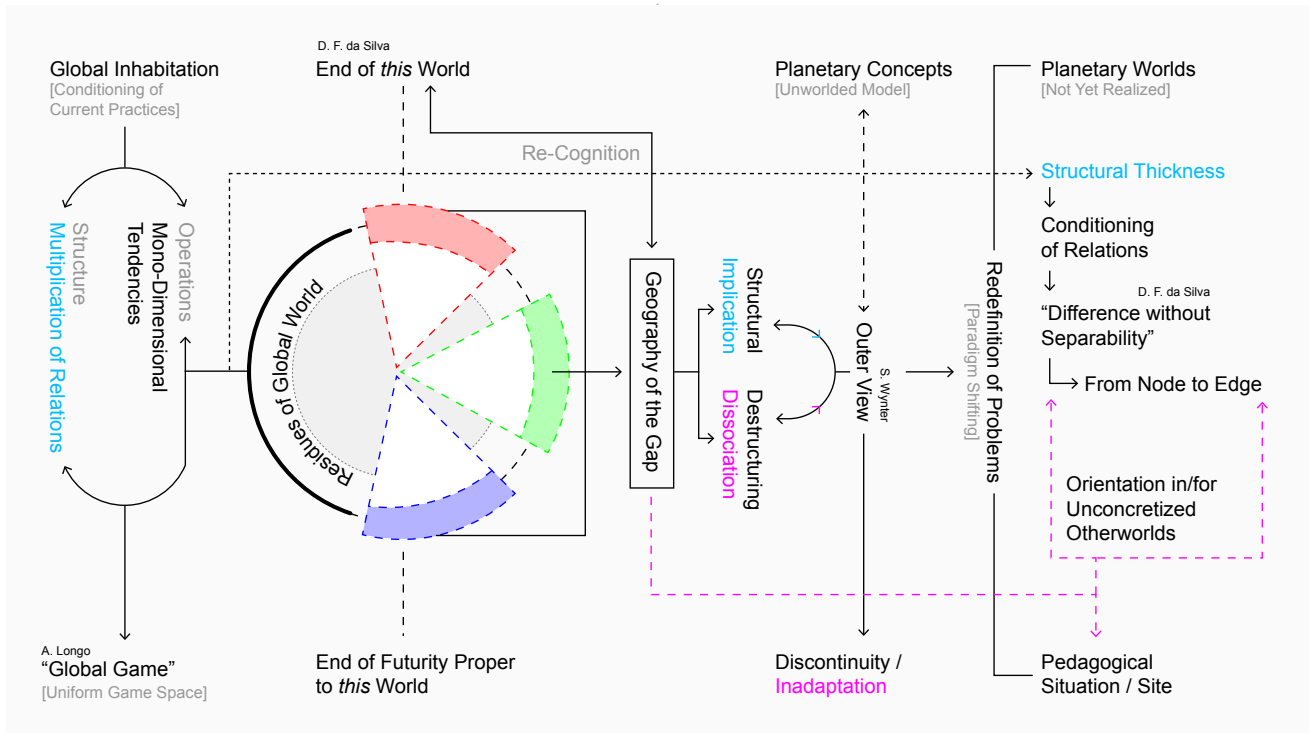
Diagram courtesy of the author.

submission of the entirety of current human activity to capitalist logics. While diagnoses of pervasive worldly-operators are indispensable, struggles for otherworlds demand a minimum speculative commitment to the incomplete-ness of all worlds: that it is possible to config-ure coexistence differently.

INHABITING PLANETARY THICKNESS

Planetarity[15] can be understood as the (not yet concretized) making of inhabitable worlds in common, as they emerge from, and negotiate the residual artifacts of, laminated, pluri-ma-terial histories. The clues for its inhabitable divergence from a global world can be located in the residual archaeology of its formal struc-ture. That is, the planetary is the consequence of an exponential multiplication of relations between diverse entities, temporalities, chem-istries and materials. Such a structure yields a multi-dimensional spatial diagram that is diminished by socio-economic-technical man-ners of doing, driven by a making-small ethos. The expansiveness of this global-world, as it turns out, is quite flat and mono-dimension-al. In contrast, planetary inhabitation must

prioritize structural 'thickness', departing from an emphasis on the 'sites' of relation inherent to the formal, nth-dimensional conditions of its very composition. Within such a relationally weighted, referential framework, the problem space shifts from questions of where things stand (as self-contained entities), to how things 'hang together', from which we can extrapolate the consequences of several political predis-positions belonging to a global-world.[16] First, an undermining of liberal governmentality that situates freedoms at the granular unit of the in-dividual human: shifting the locus of emphasis from a paradigm of existence (an entity) to co-existence (the relation, and not just its facticity, but its qualities). While the increased usage of terms like entanglement and interdependence highlight an emphasis on the site of relations, it is crucial to think of the conditions and condi-tioning of their existence – a qualitative dis-tinction that is often absent in representational conventions of the network-like diagrams that purport to map these entanglements. Secondly, a shift in emphasis away from Carl Schmitt's influential designation of the 'political' as that which rests on the binary determination of a friend/enemy distinction, and towards the

weighting of relations, thereby shifting emphasis towards the construction of 'we's – in other words, solidarities. To borrow the premise from Denise Ferreira da Silva, differences are inseparable: they exist and cannot be flattened by a small-world imposition, but crucially, they coexist within an nth-dimensional planetary configuration, which means they hang together through some qualitative relationship.[17] Diagrammatically thought, this shift in emphasis from the node (individual entity) to the edge (a relation) is not about romanticizing nth-dimensional interconnectivity as though its sheer structural facticity would automatically yield harmonious, fair, or desirable relations. On the contrary, by placing emphasis on the qualitative potency of relations, it becomes possible to better address socio-structural asymmetries, namely, the conditioning of frictional relations.

PEDAGOGIES OF OTHERWORLDING
When considering worlds and otherworlding, the question of planetary pedagogies becomes inextricable from the question of pedagogies at the end of a world. This is a more substantial problem than simply updating or repopulating existing-world epistemological practices with new terms, methods and research. Institutions of learning belong to worlds: they are infused by procedures of knowing whose very intelligibility within a world works to sustain the self-referential completeness of that world. Simply stated, institutions of learning incentivize genres of knowledge that are relevant to the operations of their world as (if) a 'total' system. Moreover, considering the increased submission of contemporary institutions to 'global game' entrenchment, their primary function is to adapt learners to said world (discursively, economically and skillfully). 'Learners,' is used here broadly, in deference to Lewis Gordon's claim that the only difference between students and teachers, is merely the 'advanced student' status of a teacher.[18] At the end of a world, however, when axiomatic cohesion is decaying, the question of pedagogy involves two critical factors. How

do we learn inadaptation to a given world configuration (the negative labour of making the irrelevance of structuring frames of reference, intelligible)? How do we begin to think referential frameworks for an unconcretized otherworld (an affirmative labour, for which inductive modes of knowing are inadequate because there are no memories available from a world that has yet to be inhabited)? There is a delicate threshold in this affirmative step which must be emphasised: the challenge is to grapple with the unknown without giving in to the temptation to force it unreasonably into familiar knowledge paradigms as a movement of false certainty-making; or else to mystify the unknown absolutely (an equally false logic which claims that because something cannot be fully known, there is no degree of access to it whatsoever). This delicate threshold can be described as a constitutive inter-worldly friction between the probable and the possible, namely: the site of meta-relations between an actualized world and an unactualized otherworld. It is at the end of this world that practical and conceptual commitments to such meta-relational sites demand experimental, rigorous, yet playful ramification. Such activities need not be without joy, but they are not devoid of risk. However, as the small-world logic of the global game has reached an apex in incessantly producing vulnerabilities that are masked as 'necessary risk', the question of ongoing commitment to this world has become increasingly palpable as a threat, revealing the necessity for dis-identification with this world that can only be affirmatively realized by collectively risking commitments for possible otherworlds.[19]

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3. Conrad Hamilton, "The Discrete Ideology of Thomas Piketty: Successes and Failures of 'Capital and Ideology'", in *Merion West* (2 July, 2020) See: https://merionwest.com/2020/07/02/the-successes-and-failures-of-thomas-pikettys-capital-and-ideology/
4. Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing introduced the concept of 'friction' to describe the co-production of cultures through interactions across difference in instances of 'worldly encounter'. See *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).
5. Anna Longo, "Escaping the Network", in *Open Philosophy*, no. 3, 2020, 175-186.
6. Federico Campagna, "Old Worlds and New Beginnings", Digital Earth lecture at Art Jameel, Dubai, UAE. (7 November, 2019) See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oIT-Ut_o5ug&t=383s&ab_channel=ArtJameel. It is also notable that from a different theoretical position, other thinkers, such as Denise Ferreira da Silva have also reached an 'end of this world' thesis, See Denise Ferreira da Silva, "An End to This World", (interviewed by Susanne Leeb and Kerstin Stakemeier), in *Texte zur Kunst* (2019) See: https://www.textezurkunst.de/articles/interview-ferreira-da-silva/
7. Lewis R. Gordon defines 'Euromodernity' in the following way: 'By "Euromodernity," I don't mean "European people." The term simply means the constellation of convictions, arguments, policies, and a worldview promoting the idea that the only way legitimately to belong to the present and as a consequence the future is to be or become European.' See: Lewis R. Gordon, "Black Aesthetics, Black Value", in *Public Culture* (30:1, 2018) 19-34.
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9. Lewis R. Gordon, "Shifting the Geography of Reason", (interview with Madina Tlostanova), in *New Frame* (2019) See: https://www.newframe.com/shifting-geography-reason/
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11. Anna Longo, "Escaping the Network".
12. Ibid.
13. Sylvia Wynter, "A Ceremony Must Be Found: After Humanism", in *boundary* 2, 12 (Spring-Autumn 1984) 19–70.
14. James Trafford, "Reason and Power: Difference, Structural Implication, and Political Transformation", in *Contemporary Political Theory*, (18 2 June 2019) 227–247.
15. Gayatri Spivak introduced the term 'planetary' in 1997, to advocate forms of life distinct from those in globalization. Because she uses the term as a way to describe a space for living (not an abstract model, like the "globe"), 'planetarity' can be understood as the inhabitable translation of planetary thought. See: Gayatri Spivak, "Imperative to Re-imagine the Planet", in *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013) 335-350.
16. Wilfrid Sellars, "Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man," in *Science, Perception and Reality* (Ridgeview Publishing Company, 1991), 1–41. (Original essay 1960).
17. Denise Ferreira da Silva, "On Difference Without Separability," in *Live Uncertainty: Catalogue for the 32nd Sao Paolo Biennale*, (2016) 57-65.
18. Lewis R. Gordon "Fanon, the Teacher", (lecture) *Frantz Fanon: A Colloquium*, Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research (5 March, 2020) Johannesburg, SA. Link
19. Reza Negarestani, *Intelligence and Spirit* (Falmouth: Urbanomic 2018), 488.

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