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# Mapping Reversible Destiny

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The following Generations, who were not so fond of the Study of Cartography as their Forebears had been, saw that the vast Map was Useless, and not without some Pitilessness was it, that they delivered it up to the Inclemencies of the Sun and Winters. (Borges 1999: 325)

Jorge Luis Borges tells of an emperor who orders a map of the empire. The imperial map-makers present their work, but the emperor sends it back—the map is not precise enough. The map-makers make it more precise, and present the better, more exact, and hence bigger copy; but the emperor is still not satisfied. Several tries later, a map is produced that is so precise it is an exact replica of the empire. They spread it across the empire so the emperor can see how accurate and complete it is. The emperor is pleased. Yet where are they to keep this giant map? “Let’s just keep it spread out on the empire,” suggests a young map-maker, “it’s a perfect fit.” So they do, and now all the people go about their business walking on the map like a giant carpet. Time passes. The people forget they are walking on the map. The empire changes. Rivers shift; mountains rise, others erode. The map becomes more and more wrong. The people cannot understand why it is so hard to find their way. Why does it rain in the desert, while our crops die of drought in the valley? The people are lost. They need a new map.

We too are lost. We—that is, “we” of the West, the global North; we technoscientific, materialist “global citizens” of consumer culture; we of the so-called WEIRD demographic (western, educated, industrialized, rich and democratic; cf. Spinney 2010)—we need a new map. Such a map is not just

geographic, though it is also that. It is conceptual with ontological force, expressed in Parmenides' claim that being and thinking are one, and Heidegger's "world": a lived context of meaning that includes "earth", i.e. natural entities and ecosystems as well as built environments, cultural practices, infrastructure...(Heidegger 1962: 93/65). In Madeleine Gins and Arakawa's terms, the map is landing site. Wade Davis (2009) names those who sustain the knowledge-practice of meaning-making in cultural collectives "wayfinders," and he describes and explains the wayfinders and wayfinding of indigenous cultures from across the globe. In light of the close connection he makes between wayfinding and place, Glazebrook once asked him what hope remains for Western culture, given its foundational idealization of universality that supports dissociation from place or context of any kind. His reply was vitriolic, a rant on the successes of contemporary technoscience that could easily be taken as either praise or condemnation. Ultimately Davis' plea is for preservation of indigenous language, culture and peoples in the hope that the human species might have a future after the fall of WEIRD civilization.

Perhaps, however, Heidegger's Hölderlin is right that

...where danger is, grows  
The saving power also. (1977a: 28/32 ff.)

such that some hope might come from within the Western intellectual tradition. Arakawa and Gins are just such hope—a crisis ethics that builds a new map, reversing destiny by deciding not to die. But, the thing is—the hard part—we have to do it ourselves. They teach that we are all map-makers. We are each already on the map, which is to say in the map, that is, we *are* the map. So we have to make the map, which we are always already in, where we already stand, which is on nothing, under nothing, and understanding even less. What we have, then, is a tentative 'holding-in-place': a place to hold on to, a cleaving while already under and on the way. And we are always on the way.

Map-makers that also are the map must, then, be audacious. To decide with Arakawa and Gins not to die is to decide to *live* differently. Reversing destiny means examining, resisting and rejecting things (things that are not things at all,

but ideas/worldviews/cultural assumptions) that have long been taken for granted. Such ideas/worldviews/cultural assumptions are practical and comforting. They provide a framework of understanding, a conceptual map that makes sense of the world and experience of and in it. Such structures are necessary, because without a conceptual map there is no way to make sense of experience. However, as Borges' tale of the emperor and his map-makers illustrates, even helpful structures that were once a "perfect fit" can eventually create havoc.

To avoid such havoc, this paper explores an optional future with various conceptual maps. It does this by examining the implications of reversible destiny within the context of late capitalism's map. We first suggest that the crisis ethics of Arakawa and Gins offers an alternative to the capitalist, phallic order of consumer culture. Secondly, we reveal the fluidity of the future due to the tentativeness of the current states of affairs' destiny as history. Third, we question the global North's unimaginative definition of living, specifically related to technoscience and parenting, in order to search for possible alternatives. Ultimately, we conclude that reversing destiny calls for as much re-engineering of conceptual space as it does of bodily process.

Arakawa and Gins know that conceptual space is not disconnected from physical space. That is why they architect not just another house, but another way of living, a crisis ethics—an *êthos* that is critical insofar as it is urgent, but also in its making possible critical analysis of the assumptions that underwrite contemporary, unsustainable destiny, in particular, dualisms of body/mind, percept/concept, other/self, emotion/reason, and nature/human. Concerning body/mind dualism, in this crisis ethics, a landing site is always necessarily embodied. Embodiment is the condition for the possibility of landing sites, which requires and demands architecting because it is place; place is always physical, regardless of whatever else it is, and it is also always more than physical. So chatrooms, for example, are not places in the way that classrooms are, but they still are grounded in physical infrastructure, i.e. a computer, a router that gives wireless access, a server, etc.. At the 2<sup>nd</sup> Arakawa and Gins conference in Paris, in the capstone session with Arakawa and Gins, Arakawa

pointed down and said “seven,” noting how the separation, and subsequent connection, of perception and concept in a naïve realism has been taken for granted in contemporary human experience. Moreover, self contains radical alterity. At the meeting in Philadelphia, Arakawa asked Glazebrook if she would recognize her liver if it had been secretly removed and then offered to her. What is closest to the embodied self is also other. This demonstrates the fundamental intent of Arakawa and Gins’ architecture to break down complacency about the self so that one can instead hold oneself in place tentatively. Reuben Baron notes how far-from-equilibrium states create transitory forms of disorder through which “new, emergent forms of order” can materialize (2008: 333). These “shift people from passive, distanced views of the world to an active, participatory way of engaging the environment,” (328) and he describes how this generates an awakening of openness to new emotional experience. Traditional separations of emotion and reason are thus no longer tenable, and hence a crisis ethics is possible. In contrast to the demands of objectivity, that specifically require suspension of attachments, preferences and other such indicators of care, ethics necessitates caring and other emotional states.

Moreover, the activity of living in the architected spaces of Arakawa and Gins is thus “engaged bodily activity” (2008: 340). The embodied, personing organism engages with the environs as constant, aware interaction. It thus simply does not make sense conceptually to separate what is human from what is nature. Organisms that person are natural entities that eat and breathe in constant interaction with their environment. An organism that persons is a tentative “holding-in-place” that is in uninterrupted exchange with the ecosystem in which it is embedded.

Landing site is thus much more than the traditionally conceived “self” —it is a loss of subjectivity and objectivity that can be understood by analogy to quantum entanglement. What we mean here is not just the particular version of entanglement made famous in Einstein’s thought experiments (1935) and measured in tests of Bell’s inequalities (1964; cf. d’Espagnat 1979), in which the momentum or spin of one particle is inseparable from the other. Paired particles are so entangled that measurement of one determines the value of the other,

generating all kinds of worries about non-locality, hidden variables, and long-standing philosophical conceptions of causality. We mean rather a more general, and indeed mundane, kind of quantum entanglement that happens in the event of measurement. Measurement at such small scale is only possible by reading the results of interaction between small-scale entities. What one has is not a distinct, dissimilar and separate measurer applied to what is measured, but an intervention that brings measured and measurer together so they interact in one single event. Both are changed, constituted anew in that event. Likewise, in *On the Soul*, Aristotle describes change: in seeing, for example, it may appear that there are two things, one seen and one doing the seeing (1984: 34-35). In fact, these are just two different aspects of one event: the event of seeing. The disruption, the far-from-equilibrium experience of the architecture of Arakawa and Gins, likewise smears the self in landing site such that one cannot say that the self is landing site in an architectural surround. Rather, landing site is the single event in which self and architectural surround are co-constituted. Glazebrook has written elsewhere on the mutual architecting of fetus and womb and considered the ways motherhood dissolves self/other boundaries (Glazebrook 2003).

Arakawa and Gins thus disturb and dis-place the dualisms that underwrite the metaphysics of subjectivity that pervades the ideology of modernity at the foundation of consumer culture. Their value re-orientation, entailed in the refusal to die, re-envisions “concrete ways in which the body can be actively coupled with space” (Hansen 2002: 332). Accordingly, they offer promise and hope through less destructive daily living. A pressing implication for sustainability that has not yet been explored in the literature on Arakawa and Gins is, however, exactly this refusal to die. We explore here two of these implications. The first is that organisms that refuse to stop personing cannot enculture sustainably if they practice contemporary WEIRD consumption patterns. Secondly, organisms that refuse to stop personing cannot enculture sustainably if they reproduce.

## Reversing Consuming

A crucial challenge for consumer culture, also called late capitalism, is ecological sustainability. Unfortunately, those most empowered to mitigate their ecological impact, the WEIRD “we,” are most busy with unsustainable practices. This problem is not an inevitable consequence of development, progress or the human condition. Rather, unsustainable living is at the essence of consumer culture, and ecodestruction is its direct result. Consumer culture is a perfect storm of unsustainable practices whose origins are historically contingent. This is a good thing, as it means that historical destiny is not fixed. As Arakawa and Gins demand, it can be reversed. We (the authors) are not especially tied to reversal; that implies going the other way on the same axis, and transformation entails a more radical shift not so prone to dualistic thinking. Some inversions may, however, play a necessary role in the transformative process. For instance, it is necessary and corrective to abolish the modern scientific ideology that others (which here is a verb: to other, to make different and reduce to that difference) alternative knowledge systems such as indigenous models or traditional women’s moral wisdom (“old wives’ tales”) as ignorant and superstitious. We prefer multiplicity and diversity in the possibilities of future histories, as we cannot concede that there is one, singular human narrative. Rather, there are as many narratives as there are landing sites, keeping in mind that landing sites are shared spaces.

So, for example, there is not one narrative about life in the United States in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Rather the enslaved, the plantation owner, their wives, etc. experience their shared reality differently. Histories are thus interwoven streams that can merge, part and reconfigure in myriad ways. Reversing destiny accordingly calls for scrutiny of the history that has been formative for current location(s). It also calls for the disruption of the present such that historical destiny (the holding-in-place that has hypostatized into culture, worldview and status quo, and into which one is thrown) can be questioned and criticized toward a *tentative* holding-in-place. In other words, the future is not tentative because it has not yet happened; it is tentative because the present from which it

emerges is tentative. In reversing destiny, Arakawa and Gins thus architect an eternity that is saturatedly temporal.

The openness of the future balances the fixity of the past, if destiny is to become intentional possibility. History can be understood in different ways, but understanding the actuality of past events that are definitive for contemporary challenges is a crucial part of reversing destiny, rather than merely being blown by the winds of historical contingency. Consumer culture is at present a radically unsustainable way of living that threatens local, regional, and global ecosystems. How did it come to overwhelm landing sites and ecosystems in this way?

Glazebrook (2000) has used Heidegger's account of Western intellectual history to establish the role of modern science in environmental destruction, and provides further analysis of the ways in which modern science is an assault upon nature (Glazebrook 2001). These arguments are not reproduced here; rather, analysis is limited to technoscientific reduction of nature to resource, which hinges on nature's reckonability. When Galileo wrote in *The Assayer* that nature is a book written in the language of mathematics, he established the foundational assumption of modern science: quantification is the *a priori* (Galelei 2008: 183). Epistemologically, then, quantification is the *sine qua non* of knowledge. Ontologically, everything that is can be subject to calculation and reckoned. Is it any wonder that in contemporary practice, whether in the boardroom of a Canadian logging company, the hut of an Indonesian peasant, or the warehouse of Home Depot, the forest appears as nothing more than so many board-feet of lumber? Meanwhile the costs of deforestation, whether to the squirrel as habitat loss, to the peasant's wife as subsistence base destruction, or to the next generation who have one less place to play and one less carbon sink, appear as "externalities" at best?

Heidegger maintains in his later years, most explicitly in *What Is Called Thinking?* (1968: 135/155) and his final address that he had read at the Heidegger Circle in 1976 (1997b: 1-2), that science and technology are essentially connected and reduce nature to reckonable resource ("standing reserve" in the standard translation of *Bestand* from the technology essay) in what he calls in the *Nietzsche*

volumes, “the organized global conquest of the earth” (1982: 248/358). His insight about the domination of the mathematical in modernity can be extended to economics. The scientific reduction of nature to reckonability makes possible the technological reduction of nature to resource, that in turn makes possible the economic reduction of nature to “natural resources”, a phrase first used in 1956 according to the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* of citation.

This violent reduction includes the exploitation of human resources. From “development,” which Shiva (1988) diagnoses as “maldevelopment,” a downward spiral of destruction flows in which a small number of capitalists get rich at the expense of the rest of the planet’s inhabitants. As Heidegger argues in the technology essay, all that is (including human being) is encountered as resource (*Bestand*) to be stockpiled for future use (1977a: 26-7/30). Heidegger is most likely referring to the reduction of people to their labour. This is manifest in the extreme in contemporary sweatshop labour, but Heidegger may be thinking, given that the earliest version of this essay was read at the Bremen Club in 1949, of the stockpiling of men into the army. In contemporary WEIRD culture, i.e. consumer culture, people line up as consumers whose purchasing patterns render them complicit in the increase of deteriorating labour conditions, global scarcities, biodiversity loss, toxin generation, and greenhouse gas production. Humans who uncritically accept consumer culture as destiny are thus chillingly Darwinian in their complicity in their own death. Technoscience, not just through its facilitation of commodity production and marketing, but in its reductive logic of reckonability and stockpiling, makes possible the capitalist order of consumer culture.

In the past two decades, science and technology have brought substantial advances in knowledge of human biology, e.g. mapping of the human genome, and awareness of the role and significance of genetic factors in cancer. Yet this increase in knowledge may not be correlated with increases in life expectancy. In fact, since 1990, technoscience has been increasingly exposed as more likely to contribute to mortality because of the ways in which it underwrites poor consumer practices of health management, e.g. over-eating and sedentary lifestyles, as well as increased exposure to environmental toxins. There are, for



example, almost 100,000 synthetic (i.e. human-made) chemical compounds in use globally today (Pearce 2010: 35). Humans, and other living things, can expect to be exposed to some 75,000 artificial chemicals every day in the air we breathe, food we eat, and particles we absorb (Trivedi 2007: 44). Technoscience cannot reverse destiny because it is foundational to the destiny that must be reversed.

Even so, immortality projects have also been booming in the past 20 years from within well-established bastions of contemporary knowledge production. Aubrey de Grey, a computer technician in the Department of Genetics at Cambridge who describes himself as a “theoretical gerontologist,” claims that for a \$100 million USD, his Institute of Biomedical Gerontology will be able to make his Strategies for Engineered Negligible Senescence real (Klerkx 2005: 38-41). Futurologist Ray Kurzweil and nutritionist Terry Grossman have developed a “bridge to a bridge” strategy for immortality that uses available technology to slow ageing as a bridge to better technologies they are convinced will eventually become available (Kurzweil 2004). Kurzweil takes 250 daily dietary supplements. He also recommends genetic tests to determine the cancers to which one is susceptible and the therapies to which they will best respond, as well as nanotechnologies, for example, to replace the digestive tract with tiny robots that deliver optimum nutrition from food directly to organs and tissues. Technoscience-oriented groups aimed at limitless life extension abound, including for example Extropians, Betterhumans, and various Institutes of Singularity, Cryonics, Immortality, etc. (“Extropy Institute”). Though debates rage as to the scientific legitimacy of these projects, they have insinuated themselves into contemporary culture through universities, media and the Web. Typical of modern technoscience, these approaches assume that aging is a technical challenge, that somatic (i.e. bodily) engineering is all that is needed to combat it, and that technoscience inherently tends towards the better. These projects therein fail to reverse destiny, instead spinning us ever faster around the empty circle of technoscience. They fail to see that longevity is not simply a technical issue of bodily engineering.

What calls for thinking is precisely a reversal of the essence of technology. If the essence of technology is, as Heidegger (1977a) argues, the on-going conquest,

mastery, and appropriation as resource of all that is, and foundational to modernity, then reversal means overcoming this essence of technology. This reversal may accordingly be the *sine qua non* of the reversal of destiny Arakawa and Gins call for. In the intellectual tradition of the West, the epoch of technology is defined as *das Abendland*, the evening-land whereby consumer culture is “late,” the final configuration of a destiny that began with the Greeks. If the challenge of refusing to die is sustainability, insofar as indefinite life-expectancy of consumers easily outstrips the planet’s carrying capacity, then this challenge may be resolved by an alternative essence of technology. Glazebrook (2003a, 2004) argues that alternative technologies that are predicated upon cooperation with natural processes, as opposed to assaults on them, promise sustainability. Sustainable examples include Flowforms, the practice of letting a field lie fallow rather than flooding it with petrochemical fertilizers, as well as the use of bacteriophages versus antibiotics. Glazebrook, like Arakawa and Gins, calls for conceptual maps that displace modernist assumptions and concepts toward a new beginning.

In contrast to the disembodied practices of futurology, Arakawa and Gins do not propose to reverse destiny through technoscientific practices that separate the body and mind. Rather, they architect spaces that maintain integrated wholeness of organisms that *person* rather than treating body as passive matter. They architect not just longevity, but productivity and health. Landing in Arakawa-Gins sites means daily maintenance of circulatory, endocrine and other somatic systems such that daily routines and activities produce healthily architected selves rather than deteriorating minds trapped in neglected bodies. As the pre-retirement base shrinks while retiree numbers grow, society becomes increasingly top-heavy and, moreover, these elderly draw resources from infrastructural supports like health-care systems at greater rates than younger people. Arakawa and Gins make possible the re-thinking that renders this issue moot. Their procedural architecture invites, even implores, individuals of all ages to reinvent themselves through what Marty Rosenberg analyzes as “embodied cognition.” The constant bodily movement required in a reversible destiny loft, the bioscleave house, or similar architectural body sustains organisms in their personing. Their project is ripe for incorporation of sustainable practices like

renewable energy, but also for life- and knowledge-practices aimed less at consumption than functional living.

### **Reverse Parenting**

A further sustainability challenge remains for Arakawa and Gins: re-inventing ourselves entails recognizing the limits of our older maps. It involves re-examining, re-evaluating, and re-structuring our lives at even the most intimate levels. Re-invention is future-oriented restoration focused on our capacity to aspire (Appadurai 1996: 59), build, and strengthen as an alternative to technoscience's tendencies to exploit, dominate, and devalue. Of all possible alternatives inspired by Arakawa and Gins, reversing the destiny of parenting may perhaps be the most future oriented. Indeed, the architecture of Arakawa and Gins faces a particular challenge with respect to sustainability when it comes to reproduction. The planet's resources are finite. As an issue in inter-generational justice, how are resources to be managed such that the next generation gets its turn, its share in using them? The previous sections suggest that reversing destiny entails architecting out of consumer culture. This reduces the immediate threat to sustainability, but in the long term, and Arakawa and Gins intend a very long term indeed, sustainability cannot be achieved with the continuing increase in human population. Contemporary global issues in sustainability may be rooted in inequitable resource access and distribution and poor consumption patterns, but even if it is not already, sustainability will eventually become an issue of population and carrying capacity.

If, however, we reject the lure of technoscience, along with its exploitation of nonhuman nature, and accept the capacity to aspire and the potential of reversible destiny, we may also find new ways to escape (hetero)patriarchy. As those always on the way, our future is tentative. Reproductive choice may increase, or it may become threatened all together. Reproductive choice is paramount insofar as it is directly correlated with women's empowerment. Population studies indicate that as contraceptive prevalence increases, fertility rates decline (Hjorth, et al. 2003). Examined more closely, however, it is clear that drops in fertility rates are linked to "fundamental changes that improve women's

lives and increase their access to and control over money, credit, and other resources" (Stark 2003: 291), and improvements in their health linked to poverty alleviation and education (Sen 2002). Rather than coercive state control (as in China's one-child policy or India's infamous forced sterilization programmes), reversed destiny offers an alternative to the burden of reproduction that capitalist patriarchy assigns women.

It is important to note that there are potential reproductive injustices associated with reversible destiny, in that organisms that person may have a desire to reproduce compromised by sustainability issues. It is important here to be clear about the object of the ethical issue. If future generations will not be born because of the cost of reversed destiny, it may seem that inter-generational justice is breached due to the denial of life to yet-to-be-born future generations. However, if future generations have a right to life, even before they are conceived, then every woman must have a moral obligation to realize the life potential in every egg in her body. This *reductio ad absurdum* makes clear that the ethical implications of reversed destiny fall, as an inter-generational justice issue, not to the children who will never be born, but to the children who are born into a world that may compromise their reproductive choices. As *Making Dying Illegal* asks on its front cover:

Think of what it would mean to elementary school children to be greeted thus by their new teacher at the beginning of the school year: "Children, I can fairly well promise you that if you study hard and always strive to know the full range of the body's capabilities, you will in all probability not have to die" (Arakawa and Gins 2006).

It would mean in part that those children in all probability would not be able to reproduce. The ethical problem posed by the challenge of sustainability in reversed destiny is not that some will not be born, but that people, men and women, must give up having children: in fact, the human right to parent. Therefore, balancing reversed destiny with sustainability is a gender issue not because it affects women, but because the ways in which it affects both men and women will be different, according to differing physical, psychological, and

labour issues as well as other aspects of parenthood in the lived experience of gender.

Parenthood is an important area of re-imagination for re-mapping destiny. In *Modernity at Large*, Arjun Appadurai describes imagination as a social practice; it is no longer mere fantasy, a simple escape, or an elite pastime, but instead

an organized field of social practices, a field of work [...] a form of negotiation between sites of agency (individuals) and globally defined fields of possibility (Appadurai 2006: 31).

Reversing the destiny of parenthood means opening its possibility beyond the strictures and structures of the nuclear family such that the labour and tasks, and pleasures and love of parenting, can be shared. Plato, or perhaps Socrates, who himself had five children, suggested that in his ideal state, the *Republic*, children would not be parented by one woman and man, but rather, according to the proverb that “among friends everything is common property” (1921: 424a).

The consequences of such an arrangement would be immense. Gendered divisions of labour between parents would be undermined. Children would not necessarily be less loved; rather, the pressures of sole responsibility for meeting all the needs of the same child or children might actually promote less dysfunction than the contemporary experience of parenting allows, given poverty rates and the labour burden of parenting even in the planet’s affluent societies. Plato/Socrates argued that “no-one could deny that it would be an immense advantage for the wives and children to be common to all” (4257d). Certainly for women, Plato suggested that the communal approach to parenting allows that “women are to be put on the same footing as men” (466c) insofar as they should “engage in the same pursuits” (454e) and “share in whatever is to be done” (451e). Concerning governance in particular, “natural gifts are to be found here and there, in both sexes alike” (455d). Assumptions of gender difference that go beyond procreative function have historically justified patriarchal domination of women. Communal parenting opens possibilities for childcare to be a capacity in everyone’s personing.

Reversing the destiny of parenting transforms mothering into personing. Women thus no longer need to choose between parenthood, a career, or the exhausting balancing of both, and men are likewise freed toward personing according to self-architected care roles. One consequence of reversed destiny can be an architecting of parenting in which men's and women's roles are much more similar than in contemporary practices of capitalist (hetero)patriarchy in the global North.

Looking beyond the global North to other cultures is useful here because other cultures can have parenting practices grounded less in the nuclear family, and less in the strict division of labour that prevails in capitalist (hetero)patriarchy, despite the enlightened practices of many men. Male participation in and responsibility for childcare remains the choice of the benevolent individual rather than regular social practice, and given the influence and pervasiveness of advertising and popular media that construct gender by reproducing gender roles under the traditional capitalist, (hetero)patriarchal model, that choice by men is an active practice that can be difficult to sustain. How reversed destiny transforms the male experience and the experiences of children remains also to be explored in the grand experiment of destiny reversal but this exploration can be done, and it invites and pushes towards imaginative ways that are bold enough to re-negotiate boundaries and tread into new fields of possibility. Just as Arakawa and Gins audaciously refuse to die, organisms that person can refuse to accept the (hetero)patriarchal models of parenting.

This reversing of destiny of parenting is furthermore urgent because debates about motherhood in ethics, women's studies, philosophy, and outside the academy have become preoccupied with issues that arise in consequence of technoscientific advances, particularly those that are marketable, e.g. pre-implantation selection techniques, and eugenics. This constriction of human knowing to technoscience reproduces logics of domination that support the profit drive of consumer culture. Indeed, many reproductive technologies have become necessary not just because women in the global North are choosing to have babies later in life, but because their bodies have been toxified by the effluence of affluence. Reversing destiny by refusing to die means taking on the

question of parenting, thus putting into question not just specific reproductive technologies but the very base on which reproductive technologies make sense. The work of Arakawa and Gins makes it possible for organisms that person to live imaginatively and raise the question of parenting in radically different and fundamentally bioscleaving ways—a tentative holding-in-place that reaches across generations.

## Mapping

In conclusion, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, which is to say, Tom Stoppard, may have unwittingly passed an accurate judgment on consumer culture: “just a conspiracy of cartographers, then?” (Stoppard 1967: 77). Arakawa and Gins are wayfinders that open new maps by insisting that in an existential condemnation to be free, organisms that person are inescapably cartographers. Not trapped in the inevitability of history, personing organisms are landing site on and in a map they tentatively hold in place. Reversing consumer culture, technoscience and (hetero)patriarchy entails ontologies and praxes of cooperation rather than conquest: a new way to think existence. Human experience is not just bodied but *embodied*; that is, the self is phenomenologically located as a body that thinks, an organism that persons. Architecting the self-organism that persons is a conceptual issue that Fionn Bennett aptly called “autopoetics” in the Paris Arakawa-Gins sessions of 2005—an architecting of experience in which self and other, whether human or non-human, family or stranger, are a mutual and complicit weaving of landing site. Reversing destiny means remapping landing site in shared communities of life. Reversing destiny is, then, conceptual and embodied. We have argued that Arakawa and Gins provide understanding of the cartographic nature of landing site that offers a way out of consumer culture toward sustainable presencing, and functional possibilities for social dynamics based on reversing the (hetero)patriarchal discipline of parenting. As a closing gesture toward future development of this line of thinking, we suggest that their work cannot, then, but be political—and peace politics at that.

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