

Recalcitrance is Not Yet Resistance: Post-Fordist Labour and Incorporation in the Work of Sofia Caesar

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Abstract:

This essay examines post-Fordist labour and incorporation in the work of visual artist Sofia Caesar. It focuses particularly on her pieces *Linhas de excesso* (2017) and *Workation* (2019). Incorporation, here, designates both the operations by which bodily movements and gestures are rendered productive of exchange-value and the processes by which this commodification of movement and gesture in turn comes to be embodied by subjects. I argue that Caesar's works dramatize an ambiguity that is crucial to post-Fordist incorporation, in which the body is at once made productive and becomes the site of something that is like a resistance—but should more properly be called a recalcitrance—to its own productivity. Placing some emphasis on Caesar's own performances within these works, as well as on their treatment of media technologies, the paper argues that the incorporated body of the working subject here also appears as an object being worked on. While this ambivalence in the artworks engenders a sense of political impasse (in which it appears as if the working subject can oppose post-Fordist incorporation only at its own expense), I assert that this negativity is to be apprehended as an insistence that things could and should be otherwise.

Prelude: *Approximations*

'Too close for comfort' means exactly this. For *Canseira*, her 2019 solo exhibition in the Centro Municipal de Arte Hélio Oiticica in Rio de Janeiro, visual artist Sofia Caesar produced a work which addresses the complex legacy of the neo-concretist artist the hosting institution was named after.¹ Caesar's *Approximations (Cosmococas/Offices)* is a series of four diptychs, all of which juxtapose installation shots of Hélio Oiticica's *Cosmococas* with images of contemporary office spaces (see Figure 1). The *Cosmococas* were a series of installations and

¹ *Canseira* ran from 5 October 2019 through 30 November 2019. An untranslatable term, 'canseira' designates an emphatically corporeal sense of weariness and languor.

environments conceived around 1973 by Oiticica in collaboration with Neville D'Almeida and executed on the basis of the authors' instructions by various art institutions after Oiticica's death and subsequent art historical rehabilitation. Like many of Oiticica's works, the *Cosmococas* were meant to nurture and encourage relaxation as well as play and spontaneous, 'free', and non-instrumental movement—all of which were felt by the two artists to challenge, subvert, and undo the rigidifying and alienating disciplinary effects of the imperative of productivity.² It is worth noting, however, that by 1973 'productivity' was already beginning to designate something quite different from what Oiticica and D'Almeida had in mind. The *Cosmococas* were conceptualised at the onset of a post-Fordist hegemony which the works' authors did not foresee yet prefigured with bizarre and disconcerting accuracy. Before I arrive to the crux of my argument in the next section of the essay, I want in this prelude to employ Caesar's *Approximations (Cosmococas/Offices)* to provide some historical context and prepare the ground for the considerations on incorporation and resistance that follows by elaborating a bit on post-Fordism—particularly on the special relation between post-Fordist labour and performance.

Caesar's series of diptychs demonstrates how the lounging and playing that Oiticica and D'Almeida envisioned as remedies against the deadening demands of productive labour are now employed as techniques to *increase* productivity in contemporary workplaces. Note that this is not merely a diachronous comparison, but a genealogical critique that cuts both ways. More than just a straightforward indictment against 'playbour' and assorted contemporary working practices that have co-opted or appropriated properly liberatory tools only *post festum*, the fact that the *Cosmococas* are near-indistinguishable from your nearest Google corporate quarters can also be seen as retrospectively raising some pertinent questions concerning Oiticica's artistic project—or, at

² For more on neo-concrete art, see Ronaldo Brito's seminal essay (Brito 2017). For more on the *Cosmococas* in particular, see Sabeth Buchmann and Max Jorge Hinderer Cruz's monograph on the series (Buchman and Hinderer Cruz 2013).

the very least, concerning the art historical ‘discovery’ and institutional canonization of Oiticica’s work, which is relatively recent and coincides with the ascendancy of post-Fordist labour.



Fig. 1: Caesar’s *Approximations (Cosmococas/Offices)* juxtaposes an image of one of Oiticica and D’Ameida’s *Cosmococas* (with hammocks and wall projections of ‘drawings’ Oiticica did in cocaine on top of a Jimi Hendrix record) with a photo of a contemporary office environment.

Sofia Caesar, *Approximations (Cosmococas/Offices)*, 2019. Digital print on paper, applied directly to the gallery wall. Installation view at *Canseira*, Centro Municipal de Arte Hélio Oiticica, Rio de Janeiro, October 5 – November 30, 2019. Photo: Pat Kilgore.

It is not coincidental that theoretical attempts at grappling with the experience of work under post-Fordism have repeatedly relied on the figure of an approximation similar and related to the one traced in Caesar’s wall pieces: the approximation of labour and performance. Paolo Virno has famously likened post-Fordist work to virtuoso performance—exemplified, for Virno, by the classical pianist Glenn Gould—for its absence of a clear end product and the way in which it tends to revolve around a spectacularisation and ‘staging’ of one’s work for others (52-66). Sven Lütticken has characterised ‘*general performance* as the basis of the new labor,’ the latter of which

actualises the programmes of (neo-)avant-gardist (performance) art in unanticipated—and frequently perverse—ways (1, emphasis in original). It is worth noting that ‘performance’, for both Virno and Lütticken, comes to connote something almost diametrically opposed to the ‘performance principle’ that, according to Herbert Marcuse, was the dominant form taken by the reality principle in what now appears as a pre-post-Fordist modernity. This economic formation was still characterised by rationalisation, bureaucratisation, and specialisation, as well as by a proliferation of disciplinary practices described by Marcuse as ‘surplus repression’ (44-45).³ Post-Fordism, in contrast, captures and capitalises on much of what more ‘old-fashioned,’ industrial-style regimes of labour were and still are at pains to eliminate and suppress; it is in this sense that one may speak of a shift ‘from discipline to performance’—to employ Jon McKenzie’s formulation (2001).

The approximation of labour and performance has been registered in writing on performance art as well. To give but one out of many possible examples: in a critical assessment of some recent re-performances of pieces by Marina Abramović (and of the exploitative conditions under which the performers interpreting the pieces laboured), Bojana Kunst has argued that ‘in today’s capitalism we work in the manner that Abramović calls performance mode’ (42). In an essay equally critical of Abramović’s (re-)performances, E. C. Feiss concludes by making a case for the integration and consideration of the entanglement of performance with post-Fordist work in the reception of performance art. The finer points or implications of the various theorisations of the approximation of post-Fordist labour and performance mentioned here may well be debatable. Concerning Virno, for example, rightful objections have been raised against what appears as an at times wilful misreading of crucial passages in Marx on performance (Boyle 15), or indeed against the confused reception and

³ Raphael Fonseca, curator of *Canseira*, mentions *Eros and Civilization* concludes his brief essay on the exhibition by saying that if Oiticica and D’Almeida drew inspiration from reading Marcuse’s classic, the appropriate theoretical reference for Caesar’s work would be Byung-Chul Han’s pamphlet *The Burnout Society*.

employment of Virno's notion of virtuosity in performance scholarship (Jackson 17). But as Caesar's *Approximations (Cosmococas/Offices)* shows, the figure of this approximation itself—which Caesar's work concretises, specifies, and gives a determinate content—remains hard to ignore as a sign of the times.

Incorporation

In this essay, I examine the treatment of post-Fordist labour and incorporation in two pieces by visual artist Sofia Caesar, namely *Linhas de excesso (Excess Lines)* (2017) and *Workation* (2019). In doing so, I place some emphasis on instances of the performative in these two works, as well as on their framing and usage of media technologies. Incorporation, here, designates the operations by which bodily movements and gestures are rendered productive of exchange-value and the processes by which this commodification of movement and gesture in turn comes to be embodied and inhabited by subjects. In their brief foreword to an edited volume entitled *Incorporations*, Jonathan Crary and Sanford Kwinter write that their title encompasses both 'the integration of human life forces into the larger-than-human systems of social and technical organization' and 'the finer-grained processes of embodiment' (12). My usage of 'incorporation' similarly comprises, and hinges on, both meanings of the term—incorporation *of* and incorporation *in* the subject, if you will, or passively *being incorporated* and actively *incorporating*. As such, incorporation designates not only capital's subsumption and expropriation of the labour-power of (working) bodies, but refers also to how, as Alexander Kluge and Oskar Negt write in *History & Obstinacy*, '[a]ll external forms of labor, as well as the tools they involve, replicate themselves on the subjective side of humans' (92). According to Kluge and Negt, this engenders the development of an obstinacy in and among human beings. This obstinacy emerges 'out of a resistance to primitive expropriation', but as such is also its product (390).

Crary and Kwinter, as well as Kluge and Negt, are concerned with modernity at large—with the *longue durée* of how labour-power

comes to be extracted from bodies which in turn interiorise, respond to, and become formed by those very processes of extraction. Clearly, however, the work of these authors acquires a renewed pertinence under post-Fordism. For what the aforementioned theorisations of the approximation of post-Fordist labour and performance invariably signal is that the rendering-productive of the body, as well as the bodily internalisation of productivity, take on new forms in post-Fordism, and become manifest in distinctly novel ways. In what follows, I read Caesar's work for its reading of these new forms and manifestations of incorporation under post-Fordism.

In so doing, I want to foreground how *Linhas de excesso* and *Workation* present a dramatisation of an ambivalence particular to post-Fordist incorporation, where the body is at once made productive and becomes the site of something that is like a resistance—but, I will argue, should more properly be called a recalcitrance—to its own productivity. My discussion of the works therefore moves both with and against two opposing inclinations in critical theory, which tend either to present the integration in and appropriation by capital of bodily movement and performance as a *fait accompli*, or to valorise the body as inherently, if also residually, resistant to such integration and appropriation. I will argue that Caesar's works, by contrast, show how the emancipatory potential of bodily movement and performance is deeply and ambivalently entangled with its post-Fordist commodification.

My desire is to further demonstrate that Caesar's ambiguous treatment of incorporation—which is reflected by my double usage of that term here—evinces and articulates a fine-grained understanding of incorporation as a process in which bodies are not only worked with but also worked on. This, of course, implies serious complications for the political project of opposing post-Fordist incorporation, which cannot be resisted in any simple or straightforward manner. A pedagogy such as the one imagined by Oiticica and D'Almeida, aimed at liberating the body and its movements from the constraints imposed by productive labour conceived as basically external and foreign to that body, will not do.

Linhas de excesso

The video essay *Linhas de excesso* originates from research conducted by Caesar in the (media) archives of automobile producer Fiat's factory in Turin, where the company has its headquarters. It sets off with the familiar media-historical trope (initiated by the Lumière brothers in 1895 and historicised in 1995 in a Harun Farocki video) of workers leaving the factory. The silent, black-and white film of Fiat workers exiting the site of production is accompanied by an audio-track in which we hear the artist in conversation with a Fiat employee who is assisting her in navigating the archive. The employee seems particularly interested in pointing out one worker who, according to him, looks like a young Johnny Depp. All the while, visibly layered underneath the archival material, is footage of Caesar lying in a somewhat uncomfortable-looking pose (see Figure 2). Throughout the video, she will be at pains to simultaneously manipulate what appears to be a remote control for the camera filming her (in her right hand), and her smartphone (in her left hand). The latter item, the smartphone, is dubbed a 'pocket factory' in the text that appears atop both the historical and the newly shot footage.

First, it is important to note that *Linhas de excesso* explores scientific and technical models for the optimization of bodily movement in production lines—models that increase productivity by minimizing effort and eliminating any unnecessary manoeuvres. The video essay includes historical footage (from the Fiat archives) that served both to conduct Taylorist-style research and to didactically explain such research's principles. One worker is seen robotically bending his forearm up and down in a perfect ninety-degree angle; another clip shows only a hand repeating a gripping movement in synchrony with a metronome. This historical footage, in *Linhas de excesso*, is juxtaposed with contemporary and high-tech looking registrations of human bodily movement by means of a motion capture suit. The suggestion here is one of continuity between these diachronic models of ergonomic optimisation, which strive to get rid of 'excessive' movement and, in so

doing, more effectively incorporate workers' bodies as a transparent, rationalised, and controllable component in production processes.



Fig. 2: Archival footage of workers leaving Fiat's Turin factory, layered over footage of Caesar using the camera remote control.

Sofia Caesar, *Linhas de excesso*, 2017. Single-screen video, 7'13".

Beyond this, however, *Linhas de excesso* mostly emphasises the discontinuities between Fordist and post-Fordist (or, as we hear the artist interject at one point, "Toyotist") modes of work. The video includes, for instance, desktop footage showing an interactive 'virtual tour' through the Fiat factory, which allows online visitors to navigate through and explore the premises much like in Google Streetview. So much for the 'hidden abode of production'. And so much, indeed, for the clear-cut separation, both spatial and temporal, between work and non-work that made the historical trope of 'workers leaving the factory' possible and relevant in the first place. For *Linhas de excesso* also includes fragments of a series of videos which—as Caesar comments in the voice-over—are institutional even if they are made by the Fiat workers themselves. Here, we find groups of workers not leaving Fiat's premises but filming themselves dancing in their offices and among (turned-off)

factory machinery (see Figure 3). The soundtrack is an instrumental rendition of Pharrell Williams' song 'Happy'. Within *Linhas de excesso*, this footage comes to signal not only the blurring of work and leisure, but also to demonstrate how ostensibly non-instrumental and 'excessive' movement (like dancing) is not so much eliminated as strategically stimulated, channelled, and captured; it is instrumentalised and turned productive as branding, public image, and PR. Importantly, the incorporation of workers' bodies relies on the surface preservation of the antithesis of work and non-work in the instance of its effective eclipse; the economic valorisation of the workers' 'off-time' performances remains deeply contingent on its signification and reception in terms of 'inefficient' and 'unproductive' creativity, spontaneity, sociability, and participation. Much like in *Approximations (Cosmococas/Offices)*, this is the post-Fordist approximation of labour and performance at its most palpable.



Fig. 3: Contemporary workers dancing in Fiat's Turin factory. Sofia Caesar, *Linhas de excesso*, 2017. Single-screen video, 7'13".

Caesar's own appearance in *Linhas de excesso* functions as something of a counterpoint to and a commentary on the dancing of these factory workers. Her performance, too, involves filming and (re)presenting herself. Slowly operating the camera's remote control and her phone (with which, from her pose, she appears to be trying to take a selfie) at the same time, she is seen twisting herself up somewhat unhappily (see Figure 4). While the economic productivity of the workers' dances relied on a disavowal and ostensible negation of productivity, here there can be no question that Caesar's performance takes some effort—that it looks like work. There is nothing particularly liberatory, or indeed excessive, about movement as it is staged here. For Caesar makes sure to make her body appear as reifying itself into a component of a somatechnical constellation which may be of her own making, but over which she ultimately appears to have only very limited mastery. Caesar's movements and gestures, hardly those of a prosthetic god, come across as directly dictated by the devices that she employs to register them; we see her in the process of becoming an extension of her tools and media devices rather than the other way around. If the smartphone is a factory that can be tucked away in one's pocket—as Caesar does in *Linhas de excesso*—it is also an apparatus that envelops, encapsulates, and incorporates.⁴ In this process of incorporation, dramatised by Caesar's performance, the body at work is simultaneously the material being worked—obtuse, obdurate, *recalcitrant*.

4 In his essay 'What Is an Apparatus?' Giorgio Agamben sees the fact that 'the gestures and behaviors of individuals have been reshaped from head to toe by the cellular phone' as evidence that it 'would probably not be wrong to define the extreme phase of capitalist development in which we live as a massive accumulation and proliferation of apparatuses' (15-16).



Fig. 4: Caesar operating the camera remote control while ostensibly taking a selfie.

Sofia Caesar, *Linhas de excesso*, 2017. Single-screen video, 7'13".

Workation

In more ways than one, *Workation* picks up where *Linhas de excesso* left off. Named after a very post-Fordist neologism—a portmanteau of ‘work’ and ‘vacation’—the work addresses the fading of the boundaries between work and free time. If, in ‘classical’ Fordist capitalism, free time could be seen as subterraneously ‘shackled to its opposite’ (Adorno 187), current iterations of post-Fordist production disappear the opposition altogether. *Workation* is a video installation in variable dimensions and consists of a somewhat lounge-like landscape formed by a large carpet and a set of cushions and pillows, all in a glorious bright yellow. Scattered throughout this landscape lie electronic devices of various scales, which therefore demand various degrees of closeness and intimacy of their viewers: a smartphone, a tablet, a laptop, and a large LCD screen (see Figure 5).

Each of these four devices displays a short clip; all of the individual clips are mute, though there is a single unifying audio track that can be heard all through *Workation*. In each clip, the setting is

different, but the scenario (which invariably unfolds in a single shot) is more or less the same. We see Caesar ostensibly engaged in ‘remote work’—at the beach, in bed, in a hammock, and on a home terrace—using her laptop, her phone, or both. All of the clips involve the artist revealing, either at the beginning or at the end of the scene, and always via her phone, a stock photograph representing someone joyfully at work in a setting highly similar to hers. And in each of them, Caesar enters into a process of performative overidentification with the stock image, a process of corrupted and corrupting mimicry. Steadily, and with increasing awkwardness, she adjusts her initial posture signalling a blend of comfort and productivity, finally to come to ‘rest’ in an uneasy-looking pose where she appears as inert, exhausted, spent. In *Linhas de excesso*, Caesar’s subtly contorted movements could still be seen as effecting, but also as the effect of, a form of productivity. *Workation* shows what is in many ways the logical end point of such efforts: utter enervation. The ultimate depletion and arrestation of bodily motion here signals a failure to live up to a certain (stock) image of productivity, a failure on behalf of the subject to fully coincide with the prototype—or, as Brian Holmes (2002) would have it, the Weberian ideal type—of the ‘flexible personality’.

I want to single out one of the clips in *Workation* because it expresses certain particularities of post-Fordist work which are worth mentioning here. The scene showing Caesar on a beach in Rio—sat on a folding chair, typing away on her phone, with her laptop resting on her knees—is something of an exception in the *Workation* ‘tetralogy’, in that it is the only instance in which Caesar is not by herself. Not only can other beachgoers be discerned in the background of this clip: it also shows other people at work (see Figure 6). Specifically, just as Caesar initiates her slow collapse, two men selling clothing and beach paraphernalia pass by at close distance. The artist, however, is oblivious to them, and similarly the two passers-by ignore her strange and contrived swooning. Among other things, this brief scene is one of a missed encounter between subjects who could have recognised each other as affected—albeit differentially—by the exigencies of the

capitalist mode of production. As such, it comes to index the extent to which even highly precarious manifestations of post-Fordist work are still products as well as markers of privilege (in this scene, particularly class and racial privilege) within the global totality of capitalist relations, and to signal the social atomisation that such privilege entails. Another way of saying this would be to argue that while Caesar, in the other clips constituting *Workation*, is merely alone, this particular scene speaks to a deeply political loneliness.



Fig. 5: Installation view of *Workation*, with another diptych from *Approximations (Cosmococas/Offices)* visible in the background.

Sofia Caesar, *Workation*, 2019. Four-channel video installation: LCD screen, laptop, tablet, smartphone. Dimensions variable. Background: Sofia Caesar, *Approximations (Cosmococas/Offices)*, 2019. Installation view at *Canseira*, Centro Municipal de Arte Hélio Oiticica, Rio de Janeiro, October 5 – November 30, 2019. Photo: Pat Kilgore.

Again, Caesar's performance shows the working subject becoming glaringly object-like in the proximity of tools supposed to empower it. In *Workation*, the mode of this showing seems to demand to be read as comic (perhaps like a post-Fordist version of Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times*), but is ultimately not exactly funny as it rejoins

‘Henri Bergson’s classic location of comic laughter at the spectacle of ‘something mechanical encrusted upon the living’ with the ‘*question* of what’s living, what’s mechanical, and who needs to know’ (Berlant and Ngai 234, emphasis in original). Are Caesar’s laptop and phone encrusted upon her, or is it the other way around? And what, one may indeed ask, is living or lively here? For Caesar is seen reduced by fatigue to a seemingly inanimate state of stillness and crude materiality. Such a state is recalcitrant in that it presents an obstacle to the body’s effective incorporation (while also, as should be clear by now, being its result).

Not coincidentally, exhaustion and assorted bodily forms of ‘malfunction’ tend increasingly to be seen—and experienced—as a vestigial testimony to what Elizabeth Grosz has called the ‘ability of bodies to always extend the frameworks which attempt to contain them, to seep beyond their domains of control’ (xi).⁵ Jonathan Crary’s account of capitalism’s struggles to overcome the obstacle of sleep—which, as a consequence, comes to feature as a subversively anti-capitalist ‘activity’—is exemplary here (2014). Anson Rabinbach, in an earlier study that was highly influential for Crary, has similarly shown that throughout capitalist modernity, fatigue was ‘linked to the body’s natural resistance to the demands of productivity’ (23) and treated as a ‘stubborn resistance to perpetual work that distinguished the human body from a machine’ (2). Caesar’s work complicates such identifications of a residual resistance in the body, qualifying the view of the body as a ‘natural’ barrier against its own incorporation while also, and importantly, not dispensing with it altogether.

5 It is worth observing that while Grosz is careful to think the materiality of the body not as ‘natural’ and stable given, but rather as historically contingent and subject to various forms of inscription, the ‘always’ here arguably suggests an exceptional occasion in which she gives in to the tendency to think the human body as innately resistant.



Fig. 6: Detail of *Workation*, with the LCD screen showing Caesar (no longer) at work on the beach in Rio.

Not Yet

In both *Linhas de excesso* and *Workation*, the incorporated body is too organic still to partake in promethean fantasies of cyborg empowerment, while also being just cybernetic enough for exploitation. It comes to figure, therefore, as a fleshy knot pulled from all sides by contradictions refusing to produce their own dialectical overcoming. This is most explicitly the case in *Workation*, where fatigue does effectively lead to what can be seen as a corporeal stoppage (with the body forcing itself to go on strike, as it were), but where this fatigue and stoppage are also emphatically the effect, and indeed the culmination, of the process of incorporation itself. Ironically, ‘vacation’ here comes to designate not free time but the state of a body from which all energy has seemingly been drained. And while Caesar’s performance in *Linhas de excesso* is less extreme (in that it is less concerned with the outer limit or endpoint of incorporation), the same ambivalence regarding corporeality’s potential to resist being rendered productive is present there as well.

My desire to insist that, in Caesar’s work, the (working) body appears as recalcitrant rather than properly resistant to its

own incorporation has much to do with this ambivalence. The recalcitrant body is antithetical to, but also a product of, processes of incorporation. At least at first, this ambivalence engenders a strong sense of political impasse and even passivity. There appears to be nothing particularly heartening or quickening about *Linhas de excesso* and *Workation*; emancipation, empowerment, or indeed any apparent possibility for politically positive action are nowhere immediately in sight, so that speaking of ‘resistance’ here would be inaccurate and a misrepresentation of what is conveyed in the work. Where resistance implies a wilful and active (if also reactive) oppositionality more or less straightforwardly geared towards emancipatory ends, recalcitrance is less directed, more ambivalent than confrontational, more emphatically conditioned by and complicit with that which it opposes. I want to assert, however, the importance of not seeing such recalcitrance—and its accompanying sense of ambiguity and impasse—as void or exclusive of political possibility.

In this, my argument is informed by (and is congruous with) Judith Butler’s work on subjection. Subjection, for Butler, ‘signifies the process of becoming subordinated by power as well as the process of becoming a subject’ (2). Butler’s insistence on thinking both significations together leads to some thorny questions regarding agency—especially political agency against those forms of subordination that inaugurate and condition the subject (10). Butler argues that the subject exceeds and is only imperfectly continuous with its subjection. It is ‘*neither* fully determined by power *nor* fully determining of power (but significantly and partially both),’ and as such ‘exceeds the logic of noncontradiction’ (Butler 17, emphasis original). Similarly, resistance and recalcitrance are not simply mutually exclusive opposites of each other (with the former presenting effective politicisation and the latter its absence), and recalcitrance, though deeply marked by and dependent on the powers it is produced by, can also negate and work against those very powers.

A recalcitrance, then, that is not *not* resistance, but not *yet* resistance. The ‘not yet’ here is important in that it speaks to a latent potential, an unspoken promise perhaps, for the recalcitrance of

the incorporated body to effect and initiate political processes of emancipation impossible to fully foresee or anticipate. Such a conception of recalcitrance not only helps ward off self-defeating assumptions of political pessimism, but also to complement and to question overly heroic and vanguardist understandings or notions of resistance as the privileged mode of political activity. It involves a recognition that forms of struggle against post-Fordist incorporation may not necessarily lie worlds apart from the forms of subjection such incorporation entails—and that, by extension, resistance anyhow necessitates non-oppositional thinking precisely to the extent to which it is always and inevitably resistance in opposition to something. Therefore, if Caesar's works tarry with the negative, this is not exclusively a fatal strategy nor a sure sign of defeatism. José Esteban Muñoz, seizing and building on the work of Ernst Bloch, has argued that in aesthetic practice failure and negativity intimate the dimension of the utopian as a critical contention that things could, and indeed should, be otherwise (173).

Certainly, Caesar offers no guarantees that incorporation can or will be overcome. And works like *Linhas de excesso* and *Workation* prescribe no pathways for proceeding politically. The assertion that these pieces bring into view a bodily recalcitrance that is *not yet* a resistance is no longer descriptive, analytical, or for that matter 'reasonable' in any strict sense; it is, rather, an utterance aspiring to prove performative against all odds. The present intensification of incorporation, as Caesar's work shows, produces antinomies that are all too clearly and all too painfully felt by post-Fordist subjects—including myself. There is no need to add to the injury of present-day political and economic practice the insult of gloomy doomsday theories revelling in the totality and inevitability of whichever ongoing catastrophe, scoffing at even the thought of the possibility of any form of amelioration, which is thereby effectively foreclosed. A better response to Caesar's work, more invigorating and more politically fruitful, would be to want to see and say that its negativity surely cannot be merely that, and to learn to recognize in it a helplessly hopeful (or was it helpfully hopeless?) insistence on what is not yet.

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