

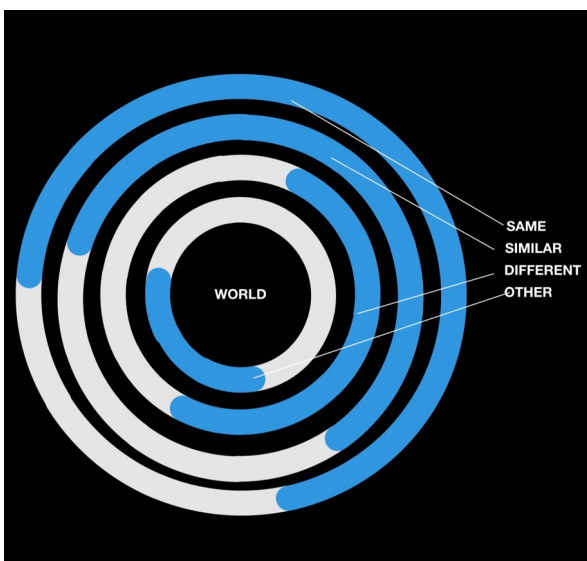


What is our notion of *efficiency* if it implies that—in haste and the heat of the action—no thought is pursued to the *end*, and no work is *completed*. That is, accelerating haste steering into the mess that we are currently caught by. We must query which positions we ourselves have moved into that contribute to reinforce this tendency. There might be other ones that are of avail: alternatives to the predatorial notions of *efficiency* that are now out in the open. We are talking about the ‘effective immediate’ measures, asserting the truth of answers to questions we have not asked.

The dismissive way that society is relating to *art* might be a case in point, to learn the lessons needed at this juncture. In *research*, it can readily be observed and trailed in what can call peer-to-peer bureaucracy. The framework of economic subventions—both in art and research—are such that certain conditions are set, already in the *time-allocation* given for a peer to *level* with the work of another peer. Which means that the time needed to level with a research-problem is limited to the time allocated to the *administration* of the problem. The questions are thus *unasked*.

That is, the time of the query/*investigation* and the time we are *living* in will be *beyond* the range of the peer-review: and means that we will be at a loss when asking and responding to questions that break with this time-frame. Pertaining to the demand for *definition* of the research field: if it cannot be boiled down to a bullet-point—but is disseminated into the mesh of work—then it has *not* been defined, or not been *sufficiently* defined. What, under the circumstances, is sufficient, is something that we might want to ask. But we will not: because there is no time. We are in haste.

Here, a problem that *lacks* a bullet-pointed definition *lacks* identification. It affects our real possibility of relating to something *else* unless we are already acquainted with and know it. The possibility of going into uncharted terrain is barred already here. If it is *not* same-same with something that we are familiar with, it has no identity. If the query is at a stage—reflecting the current state of the art—where methods will *not* be singled out, and thereby deemed inaccessible, the problem will be dismissed from *lack* of access. The arguments for bullet-pointed *definition* and *method* are *similar*.



The annular diagram above suggests a possible use of circular shapes without having to close them: here, blue is the defining/filling element, while the grey/white parts are left open. The diagram features one tentative illustration of the relation between the same, similar, different and other in human judgement in an immersive connection with the world. That is, environmental in this sense.

Then, by a tour de force, if the peer decides—on the basis of the two previous points—that the work presents us with *nothing* new, in terms of insights and experience, since its subject areas are *unclear*, novelty has now been defined as an *enclosure* with a guarded boundary. Clearly, such notions of 1) benchmarked novelty are *different* from unprecedented explorations of 2) uncharted terrains. Of course, we could be tempted to stop here and conclude on the banality of the historic observation that where cash is king, mediocrity is queen. As it is ever validated we can readily give up.

We are not even surprised at it: everyone knows it. The argument is crowned—by king and queen—in

the final coup-de-grâce of *othering*. Since peer-system is not bound by the obligation of accounting for the specific differences between these radically different determinations of things *new*, it will claim that the relations between part-to-whole (the mereology) of the project lack explication, and remain unaccounted for. As Žižek (2006) pointed out—referring to Metzinger—transparency is a special kind of darkness: we are blind to it because we see through it. Opacity is rejected.

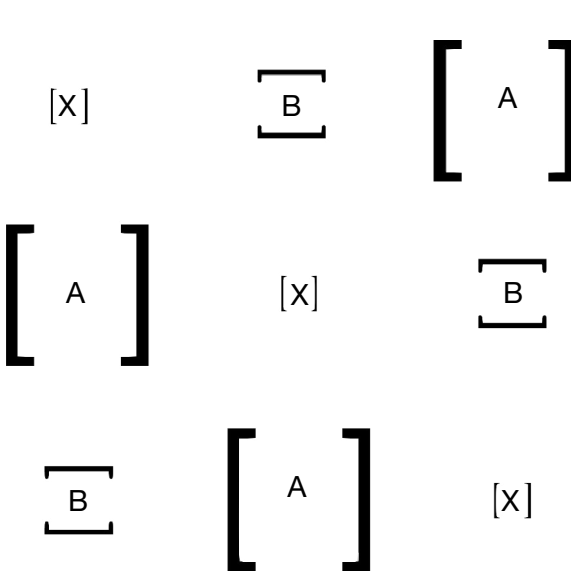
Projects that research problems at the edge of the time-matter cusp will be particularly vulnerable to this kind of blindness—the blindness of transparency—because it asks a question which transparency unasks: that is, how our *categories of understanding* are affected by changes that do *not* occur in time, but changes of time occurring in phase transitions where the investigator is not an external spectator, but is in for the ride with what s/he attempts to grapple with. Such immersive approaches might be the only ones existing with a certain type of problem: opacity problems.

What we are talking about is therefore not the lack/absence of a method, but the implications of a *participatory* methods: which is the core methodological assignment in anthropology. Recently, Nicolas Bourriaud (2023) has approached *anthropology* on assumption that *artist* will be the anthropologist of the *capitalocene*. His query articulates with the present concern with the *opaque*, in the sense that the subject of research of the anthropologist is the *other*. The kinds of knowledge that we can have of the *other* differs from the knowledge we can have of the same.

He writes (Bourriaud 2023 p. 191): “In other words, it is when we understand nothing that we begin to understand something, and the presence of an otherness represents the very condition of anthropological thought. This other that the anthropologist interrogates is not simply there to be deciphered like a riddle, but to contribute to our knowledge of being human in his environment. To put it like Maniglier, ‘otherness is therefore not the object of anthropology, it is its instrument.’” The other features a take on the whole, where communication flows in the entire system.

Because the *other*—or, *opaque*—cannot be integrated into a circuit (by definition), the parts-to-whole will not articulate organically (like, for instance, in biology). Which means that it challenges us to *make do* of it in a different way, if indeed we allow ourselves (and each other) to deal with it. It is something that the willing executives of transparency need to take into account. That is, if a whole A and its constituent parts B are to maintain a part-to-whole relationship according to the transparency-executives, it needs to be traversed by a factor X: the *other/the opaque*.

We live in a world that—from a simple geometric perspective—is governed by circles and arrows. It comes with half-baked ideas and unfinished business. The alternative to this is to built, argue and practice our concepts with *non*-closed shapes. Whether we speak of annular diagrams or matrixial ones. Both alternatives are represented here. Of which the $A + Bi = X$ to the *left*, is a case in point. But also the *annular* diagram [*recto*] featuring the relation between the same, similar different and others used in this handout to deconstruct *transparency*.



If to progress on the question of how to think and extend open and integrated—or, integrated and open—systems, we need to think about our diagramming practices at *all* levels of society, for one simple reason: we are presently being governed by a management paradigm in which diagrams is surreptitiously playing this role. Whether circles and arrows are underlying assumptions of *managerial transparency*—which we claim constitutes a factor among many in our contemporary troubles—or, they can be reliably used to *show* how managerial transparency works, *may not* be of consequence (here).

What might be of consequence, where elementary forms (one way or the other) rule the development of managerial transparency—and the effective immediate it wields—is that *we simply need to explore the potential of other elementary shapes* to improve the quality of our decisions: in their foundation, and in their impact... and also their blatant inefficiency.

The relation between a whole A and its constituent parts B as vectorial sum X. That is R (A, B) as an environmental *vectorial sum*