

Introduction: Hybrid Futures

I hold out my hand to the future.

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WHAT THIS BOOK IS ABOUT

This book is about uncertainty, futures, machines and design. It is also about power, intended in both senses of entrapment and coercion (*potestas*), and capacity and potential (*potentia*). I place uncertainty at the centre of a web where these lines of inquiry concerning uncertainty, power, futures, machines and design, intersect and contaminate each other. This transversality is necessary to cast uncertainty in a new light, one that illuminates the specificity of the current moment – the ‘now’ – while treasuring the shadows through which the ‘now’ tilts into the future.

I believe that the transversal inquiry into uncertainty I propose, whose aim is to reposition how uncertainty is conceptualized, discussed, handled, metaphorized and confronted, is crucial to make sense of one of the dominant issues of our time: the epistemic challenges brought by *planetary computation* – the ‘most radical process of artificialization of intelligence that human history has ever seen’.² Planetary computation has epoch-defining effects: what counts as knowledge has been reconfigured by intelligent machines of prediction; the automation of decision-making has become a mode of governance – known as algorithmic governmentality; uncertainty is constrained into predictable grooves

¹ Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis. An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), 134.

² Luciana Parisi, ‘Instrumental Reason, Algorithmic Capitalism, and the Incomputable’, in *Alleys of Your Mind. Augmented Intelligence and its Traumas*, ed. Matteo Pasquinelli (Lüneburg: Meson Press, 2015), 130.

that capture my potential, pre-empt my behaviours, foreclose my futures. As uncertainty gets seized, ambiguity is eroded, and existence is impoverished.

For me, to understand these power manoeuvres that target uncertainty, necessary in order to disengage from them and reclaim the uncertainty of futures, has directly to do with rethinking what uncertainty is and how to re-inhabit it. A transversal approach to uncertainty like the one *The Power of Maybes* proposes becomes therefore essential to the project of resisting machines' capture. My argument, which is also a wager, is that an *allyship with uncertainty is not only possible but necessary* to build an alternative to the worst excesses of algorithmic governmentality. I claim that uncertainty can be entered into, dwelled in and experienced as a way of counteracting capture and reimagining the encounter of the human with machines. This is what the *power of maybes* stands for: an endorsement to live with uncertainty by cultivating modes of knowing and being (and resisting) that hold uncertainty as an ally.

MAYBES

Uncertainty concerns *maybes*

The plural 'maybes' underpins the founding proposition of the book: that to speak of uncertainty is ultimately to speak of pure indeterminate potential prior to its capture and differentiation. Maybes stands for this unthinkable multitude of possible possibles, the ever-dynamic ungraspable *virtual ocean* of all that may be: it may be *x*, it may be *y*, it may be *z*, it may be *otherwise*. Maybes stands for radical contingency. It is not finite nor discrete, countable nor calculable, predicted nor predictable. It is *cosmic*. By cosmic I mean the becoming of all things, each thing existing in and of itself, unfolding in an infinite universe and ceaselessly and unforeseeably transforming.³ Put differently, my inquiry into uncertainty leads to the metaphysical question: How do I approach the sensible totality of the world in all its incandescent and uncertain unfolding? My thought experiment is to move across and beyond the sublunary sphere – traditionally the realm of the four elements and of a changing nature – to reach out to uncertainty in its cosmic dimension: a dimension at once material and sensible, intelligent and intelligible, where undifferentiated potential swirls.

This perspective, which in Part Two I call 'cosmological orientation', is the condition I pose to my rethinking of uncertainty. By posing uncertainty as cosmic, I regain my existence in its plenitude – with all its potential, including the potential not to. By inhabiting uncertainty as oceanic experience, I access the power of the unknown, recruiting *un-knowing* and *not-knowing* not only

³ It was the Greek pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus who invented the concept of cosmos (*kosmos*) to describe an ordered universe where everything is flux and change is constant, an eternal and uncreated cosmos, as the 'primordial generator of matter and energy, the constructor of all stars and planets, the agitator of each and every modification of spacetime'. Gökhan Kodlak, 'Cosmodality. Prolegomena to a New Architectural Metaphysics', *Log* 52 (2021): 133.

as modes of knowing but as ways of *feeling for* unknown futures away from the anticipatory discourses of neoliberal innovation, futureproofing, techno-determinism and instrumental reason. In short, by insisting on inhabiting uncertainty, rather than shunning it, I argue that I can learn to cultivate a vital capacity: how to be nourished by uncertainty, *whatever* it may bring.

This is why *The Power of Maybes* advocates that making friends with uncertainty is the portal to a full life, a life full, that is, of all its unforeseeable ‘may bes’. It is in this *whatever* that my ultimate power resides: my *power to* as well as my *power not to*, and my power to exist and resist. With this I also seek to bring back critique to the dimension of the micro-political, the minor intervention and the tiny gesture that in themselves contain all the infinite universes I belong to already. This is the reason why I argue that this oceanic, cosmic uncertainty, in all its plenitude, is the basis for a political stance of resistance and refusal, enlisted to the project of reimagining the present and designing other ways of being against the unabated ‘desertification of all modes of existence’.⁴

FUTURES

Uncertainty concerns *futures*

With futures, one of the two terms of this introduction’s title, I do not simply signal a multiplicity of futures (rather than The Future); I also wish to acknowledge futures’ *unknowns* as discordance. ‘Futures’ speaks to the challenge of moving into unknown tomorrows without imposing today’s (or yesterday’s) script of what the future should be.

I echo philosopher Elizabeth Grosz’s pointed question: ‘How is it possible to revel and delight in the indeterminacy of the future without raising the kind of panic and defensive counterreactions that surround the attempts of the old to contain the new, to predict, anticipate, and incorporate the new within its already existing frameworks?’⁵ One way ‘to revel and delight in the indeterminacy of the future’ is by staying alert to the insidious hold of those well-rehearsed stories about the future that the Global North is so fond of: technology will save the world, progress is growth, growth is a linear upward trajectory, instrumental reason prevails, capitalism is unavoidable. Whether these stories envision the future as a territory to occupy, a resource to extract, or a disembodied realm to manage, they are all teleological stories that serve the future as a *foreclosed*

⁴ Isabelle Stengers and Didier Debaise, ‘The Insistence of Possibles. Towards a Speculative Pragmatism’, *Parse* 7 (2017): 14.

⁵ Elizabeth Grosz, ‘Thinking the New. Of Futures Yet Unthoughts’, in *Becomings. Explorations in Time, Memory, and Futures*, ed. Elizabeth Grosz (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 16.

event, already given and pre-ordained.⁶ As they colonize imagination, these stories mould anticipation, become naturalized, appear *inevitable*.

But nowhere is written that the future cannot be changed. The biggest story of all is the story of inevitability. Inevitability is like a bad dream from which I struggle to wake up, but wake up I must. Even if it feels unthinkable, the tracks the future seems to be on *can* be upended. These tracks lead straight to planetary exhaustion, alienation and annihilation. They *must* be upended. New futures stories ought to be spun from the unrecognizability of the truly unknown, from the ‘infinite variability of the world’, the ‘delight of indeterminacy’ and the irrevocable, oceanic, cosmic uncertainty.

Rallying against what he calls ‘inevitabilism’, philosopher and historian of science Andrew Pickering writes about being ‘struck by an almost total absence of ontological visions that do not conjure up a regular and knowable world, that conjure up something different. We have nothing to set against what I could call the modern ontology of fixity and knowability’.⁷ The only inevitability, he continues, is the infinite variability of the world, shining unexpectedly like a crystal catching the light in endless refractions, each time slightly different and new. Looking into uncertainty as if it was a crystal is how I begin to stray from a future where ‘the uncontained is woven into a containing framework and the new is made recognizable and tied to the known’.⁸ It is how I begin to step into the unknown.

MACHINES

Uncertainty concerns *machines*

Uncertainty goes to the core of the world of machines. That machines – the shortcut I use for computational systems, processes and their effects – rely on incomputability, thus unknowability, is not a new idea. Already in his groundbreaking 1936 paper, Alan Turing had proved the logical impossibility of predicting which machine, given a certain input, would halt and which would not.⁹ This

⁶ Keri Facer, *Learning Futures. Education, Technology, and Social Change* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011); Keri Facer, ‘Storytelling in Troubled Times. What is the Role for Educators in the Deep Crises of the 21st Century?’, *Literacy* 53, no. 1 (2019): 3–13; Keri Facer and Arathi Sriprakash, ‘Provincializing Futures Literacy. A Caution Against Codification’, *Futures* 133 (2021); Barbara Adam and Chris Groves, *Future Matters. Action, Knowledge, Ethics* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007); Susan Harding and Daniel Rosenberg eds, *Histories of the Future* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005); Riel Miller ed., *Transforming the Future. Anticipation in the 21st Century* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018); John Urry, *What is the Future?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016).

⁷ Andrew Pickering, ‘Science, Contingency and Ontology’, in *Science As It Could Have Been. Discussing the Contingency/Inevitability Problem*, ed. Léna Soler, Emiliano Trizio and Andrew Pickering (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015), 118.

⁸ Grosz, ‘Thinking the New’, 16.

⁹ Charles Petzold, *The Annotated Turing. A Guided Tour through Alan Turing’s Historic Paper on Computability and the Turing Machine* (Indianapolis: Wiley, 2008).

showed that not everything is computable; and that the incomputable lies at the core of the computable. In fact, the history of computation is also, in part, the history of how the incomputable was colonized, randomness was tamed and any mismatch between digital and observable reality eliminated.¹⁰ The result of this ‘taming of the incomputable’ is the pervasive flatness of the digital ontology that characterizes planetary computation. This flatness is not only a convenient fiction that plasters over any uncertainty inherent to computation; it is also a mystification that obfuscates the mechanisms of capture of potential.

It seems to me, then, that no rethinking of uncertainty; no reclaiming of the potential that uncertainty nourishes; no alliance with uncertainty can occur unless these mechanisms are exposed and, from that standpoint, routes for resistance strategized.

Planetary computation may appear as the condition where it is no longer possible nor meaningful to disentangle human bodies, digital devices, artificial intelligence, neural architectures, data, flesh, hardware, software, carbon, silicon.¹¹ It is a seductive image. However, such over-smooth, totalizing fantasies of natural-artificial communions and biological-symbolic hybrids fail to consider the genealogy of technological automation: the servo-mechanic paradigm of technology. According to this paradigm, the automation of automation is nothing but a shift from the automation of human labour in the industrial/plantation machine. The *Power of Maybes* contends that a rethinking of uncertainty is also a way of challenging this paradigm.

The cosmic dimension of uncertainty, in other words, is revealed as reaching to and across, from the microscale of chips and bits, all the way to computation’s planetary hold. This is also why I take ‘machine’ not only as the statistical computing device designed to solve calculable problems through a discrete number of steps but as planetary computation’s epoch-defining indiscernible digital hum that, operating *below* human cognition and perception, preys upon the space where undifferentiated potential swarms prior to capture.

HYBRID OPEN-ENDEDNESS

Uncertainty concerns *hybrid open-endedness*

The hybrid – the first term of this introduction’s title *Hybrid Futures* – speaks to the unknowability of futures as the uneven mix of nonlinear timelines

¹⁰ Barry Cooper, ‘The Machine as Data. A Computational View of Emergence and Definability’, *Synthese* 192 (2015): 1958–9; Alexander Galloway, *Uncomputable. Play and Politics in the Long Digital Age* (London and New York: Verso, 2021), 4.

¹¹ See for instance, the notion of ‘onlife experience’ describing the enmeshing of virtual and real, with the digital-online world spilling over and merging with the analogue-offline world, an almost quaint description of what planetary computation stands for. Luciano Floridi, *The 4th Revolution. How the Infosphere is Reshaping Human Reality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

emerging from the play of potential as it tips (or not) into actualization.¹² In my take, the hybrid highlights the transformative value of metamorphic processes stemming from my encounter with the not-yet: what happens at the boundaries where different entities meet (and I meet worlds), each with a different horizon of potential and distinct sets of available possibilities.¹³ The hybrid is not about resolving differences into a homogenous whole and celebrating their anodyne merging; it is rather a figuration for future-making as a boundary place where knowns meet unknowns.¹⁴ Philosopher of science Peter Galison's image of boundaries as 'trading zones' is useful here to illuminate this hybrid space as a zone of transit where the traffic from heterogeneity to homogeneity and vice versa yields *metastable* systems – partial, precarious and procreative.¹⁵

By posing 'futures' (and the making of futures) as 'hybrid' I wish to highlight their open-endedness. This notion – that futures are open-ended thus inherently uncertain – demands both attention and caution. Attention, because the 'open-endedness of futures' dives to the core of my argument: uncertainty is an ally to counteract the capture of potential and the foreclosure of futures. Caution, because the 'open-endedness of futures' is one of neoliberalism's most effective rhetorical devices, together with the 'unlocking of potential'. Both rhetorics conveniently gloss over the inherited injustices baked into neoliberal practices,

¹² The hybrid, and more precisely becoming hybrid (hybridization) is something I take seriously throughout. This notion has also informed much of my thinking and previous work. My first book, published in 1997 by Italian publisher Castelvvecchi, was titled appositely *Ibridazioni* (Hybridizations).

¹³ One way of describing this is through the notion of 'adjacent possible'. Peter Galison draws from, among others, theoretical biologist and complexity scholar Stuart Kauffman, to articulate the potential offered by elements outside of, yet near, contiguous, or tangential to, a system, offering opportunity for systemic expansion, connection-building and boundary-work. Stuart Kauffman, *Investigations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). For an example of this approach in the Global South context: John Van Breda and Mark Swilling, 'The Guiding Logics and Principles for Designing Emergent Transdisciplinary Research Processes. Learning Experiences and Reflections from a Transdisciplinary Urban Case Study in Enkanini Informal Settlement, South Africa', *Sustainability Science* 13, no. 42 (2018): 1–19. I will return to adjacent possibles and contiguity in Chapter 3.

¹⁴ The hybrid is also a figuration for epistemological contestation. See social scientist and epistemologist Boaventura De Sousa Santos, *The End of the Cognitive Empire. The Coming of Age of Epistemologies of the South* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2018), who uses 'hybrid' to describe non-Eurocentric renditions of Eurocentric concepts, such as *hybrid methodologies* that combine indigenous methodologies with those drawn on extractivist legacy and are redeployed 'in a counterhegemonic way' (ibid., 152), as well as 'postabyssal' concepts and theories 'in which the mixture of knowledges, cultures, subjectivities, and practices subverts the abyssal line that grounds the epistemologies of the North' (ibid., 107).

¹⁵ Peter Galison, 'Trading with the Enemy', in *Trading Zones and Interactional Expertise. Creating New Kinds of Collaboration*, ed. Michael E. Gorman (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 2010), 32. See also artist and anthropologist Fiamma Montezemolo who writes about hybridization as a *circuit* rather than a location, as the possibility of a continuous fluid exchange rather than something shared. Fiamma Montezemolo, 'Tijuana, Hybridity and Beyond: A Conversation with Néstor García Canclini', *Third Text* 23, no. 6 (2009): 733–50.

systems and governance. Yes, futures may be open-ended, but not for you and I in the same way.¹⁶ It is only by acknowledging and accepting that its conditions are not evenly distributed that open-endedness can be genuinely generative. Open-endedness makes sense only from the standpoint of how my present is accountable for its future consequences: as stewardship of uncertainty. Grosz explains lucidly what open-endedness entails (and what it does not):

In seeking an open-ended future, one is not required to affirm that misnomer, 'free will,' but to *acknowledge* the capacity of any future eruption, any event, any reading, to rewrite, re-signify, reframe the present, to *accept* the role that the accidental, chance, or the undetermined plays in the unfolding of time.¹⁷

The mandate is to acknowledge and to accept: that my choice is not pitted against determination, that my position is both 'constrained and undecidable', that the uncertain is an arrow launched from the future into my present.¹⁸ Thus, to say that futures can be open-ended is not only to say that they are uncertain. It is also to say that they can be made, remade and unmade; that they are not predetermined, but emergent; not inevitable, but contestable. That there is no script. There is no *blueprint*.

For me, to stay 'open to' open-endedness means learning how to detect futures already circulating in the present, how to perceive them in the unfolding of things – in their *propensity* – and then devise *stratagems* to work with these forces, subtly, through carefully curated *micro-interventions*. Open-endedness, then, is less about prescience, preparation and planning, and more about crafting what tunes me to *meet the unknowable*.¹⁹

DESIGN

Uncertainty, finally, concerns *design* – taken in its broadest possible dimension as the activity (*designing*) that produces the artificial, builds worlds and crafts futures. Design is a crucial aspect of my inquiry into uncertainty because to design is to engage in an ontological terraforming that always concerns what could have been *otherwise*. Design is both never 'done' and always in tension towards the not-yet. As many have pointed out before me, designing concerns the realm of the artificial, which is defined precisely by its otherwise-ness: the

¹⁶ Bruno Latour, Martin Guinand and Eva Lin, Eva, 'Coping with Planetary Wars', *e-flux* 114 (2020): 1–9.

¹⁷ Grosz, 'Thinking the New', 18 (emphasis added).

¹⁸ Grosz, 'Thinking the New', 19.

¹⁹ Rebecca Solnit quotes Virginia Woolf who in January 1915 writes in her diary: 'The future is dark, which is the best thing the future can be, I think'. Not only are futures harbingers of uncertainty (and darkness), here the exhortation is to dare to stay with uncertainty, to the point of being uncertain about my own thoughts (*I think*) as well. Rebecca Solnit, *Men Explain Things To Me And Other Essays* (London: Granta, 2014), 8.

artificial is ‘what could have been other’.²⁰ If design has to do with the artificial, with contingency and with uncertainty, then, I contend, it has to do with *maybes*.

My discussion of design is embedded throughout, with considerations and reflections on design surfacing in the text whenever the chapter’s theme affords it. I made this choice in order to do justice to my ‘diffused’ argument about design, which develops on three layers. First, if design is an ontological, future-making and worldbuilding enterprise that engages with the uncertain and the potentially other, then my repositioning of uncertainty offers a framework for (and expansion of) design into a (lost) cosmic dimension. I return to this point in the Conclusion. Second, if uncertainty demands the cultivation of specific modes, routes and techniques of engagement – what in Part Two I call strata-gems – then these must be designed. It is by designing that uncertainty can become the ally I speak of and be reclaimed as a political project of resistance. *How* one enters and dwells in uncertainty becomes a design brief. Designed interventions that go on designing worlds are practices attuned not to what is, but to what *may be*, a sensibility for plenitude (pan-sensibility) that chooses to divest from the double trap of the past with its nostalgia of what has been and the safe replication of the known called The Future. But the stratagems I endorse are both ‘designed’ and ‘designing’ interventions, which brings me to the final layer – *meta-design* – which is about deploying design to reflect on design itself. What I claim for design is to experiment with rethinking uncertainty and doing so in a way that is nothing less than cosmological. What would it mean for design to be centred not on the human, the user, its outcome, or innovation, but on the truly, cosmic *uncertain*? On uncertainty’s own potential?

I conclude this introduction by circling back to Pickering’s quotation and his yearning for visions that dare conjure up something different out of the uncertain. My hope is that *The Power of Maybes*, with its multifaceted take on uncertainty, is like a crystal through which these visions may be glimpsed.

BOOK STRUCTURE AND CHAPTERS

This book is for thinkers, practitioners and researchers interested in thinking uncertainty anew and curious to explore ways of leaning into it. It is also for readers with an interest in transdisciplinary inquiry at the intersection of process philosophies, technology and design. This book will appeal most to those who are comfortable straddling multiple domains and feel happiest when hyphenated; those who have an affinity with an approach that treats theory and concept-making like a practice and may recognize themselves in the defini-

²⁰ Barry Allen, *Artifice and Design. Art and Technology in Human Experience* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2008); Clive Dilnot, ‘The Science of Uncertainty. The Potential Contribution of Design to Knowledge’, *Proceedings of the Ohio Doctoral Education in Design Conference* 1:41 (1998); Clive Dilnot, ‘The Matter of Design’, *Design Philosophy Papers* 13, no. 2 (2015): 115–23; Herbert A. Simon, *The Sciences of the Artificial* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1996).

tion of *thinkerer*.²¹ My challenge however is to take the sceptical reader with me on this journey into uncertainty. I exhort them to immerse themselves in the constellations of ideas I assemble throughout and to follow the *fil rouge* unspooling *The Power of Maybes*' proposition: that uncertainty can become an ally for living differently, for living a fuller life.

I must perhaps say at this point that if you are looking for a manual of instructions on how to control uncertainty, manage risk or future-proof your business, this book is not for you. If, on the other hand, you are open to hearing why you should trust uncertainty, why you should make it into your ally and how, then read on. I should also clarify at this point that *The Power of Maybes* is not about socio-economic factors of uncertainty, nor is it about inequality. It does not mean I dismiss the deleterious impact of precarity, the asymmetry in the distribution of resources, the unjust consequences of economic instability; or that I deny that precariousness, insecurity and their tangible effects on health, life expectation, mental wellbeing and, broadly, existence, are the direct result of injustice, violence and privilege. But this is not what the book is about. *The Power of Maybes* treats uncertainty as a *cosmic condition* – irreducible, inescapable, universal, oceanic. It proposes uncertainty as a laboratory to resist the capture of potential and cultivate a richer, fuller and, yes, a more uncertain life. It wants you to rethink what uncertainty is, and what it can do, by reclaiming the 'power of maybes'.

The book is divided into two parts. **Part One** concerns machines and automation, and the reasons why the power they exercise in constituting subjectivities, needs resisting. **Part Two** responds to the issues raised in Part One by framing them through a cosmological orientation. This cosmological orientation informs the stratagems that turn uncertainty into an ally.

Part One opens with **Chapter 1 – Machines Work** – which looks at planetary computation, the epoch-defining artificialization of intelligence, and its implications on knowledge and cognition. It traces a genealogy of the notion of *technē* to surface the tension between the instrumental and the non-instrumental within technology, and to question assumptions around productive knowledge, instrumentality and the notion of the blueprint. It examines how predictive machines work by looking at algorithms, machine learning and automation, and considers the epistemic consequences of the automation of automation. The chapter focuses on the unknowability at the core of computation to ques-

²¹ *Thinkerer* is a term I am quite partial to. As the hybrid (therefore splendidly impure) of 'thinker' and 'tinkerer', it highlights how the act of thinking is the *practice* – messy, experimental, slightly chaotic – of treating ideas like material to build temporary assemblages that induce unpredictable micro-catastrophes and shocks to thought. On the relationship between theory and practice Deleuze and Foucault say: 'No theory can develop without eventually encountering a wall, and practice is necessary for piercing this wall' ... 'Practice is a set of relays from one theoretical point to another, and theory is a relay from one practice to another'. Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault, 'A Conversation Between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze. Intellectuals and Power', in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice. Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 205.

tion the discourses of enchantment and opacity, and to begin to propose an uncertainty-driven counter-epistemology. The condition for this manoeuvre is that the extractive genealogy that still informs prevailing interpretations of technology is critically reassessed. The analysis of planetary computation continues in **Chapter 2 – Algorithmic Subjects** – which focuses on the production of subjects in the regime of algorithmic governmentality. This chapter frames algorithmic governmentality through key concepts by Félix Guattari – the Integrated World Capitalism and General Collective Equipment – and contextualizes algorithmic governmentality’s extractive mechanisms within capitalism’s innovative techniques for the capture of potential, techniques of ‘reduction’ of the plenitude of existence. The chapter concludes by asking how and where the potential for resistance may be found. It uses the discussion around the production of algorithmic subjects to locate within this process the seeds (*crystals*) of a possibility of resistance. Resistance is the topic of **Chapter 3 – Resisting Reduction** – which uses Henry Melville’s novel *Bartleby* as its starting point to examine the relations between potentiality and impotentiality, and to argue that resistance can be found in the ‘inoperative’. The chapter draws on Agamben and Deleuze’s reading of *Bartleby* to locate the possibility for resistance in the ‘amphibolic’ state where potential cohabits with impotential. It examines the inoperative as the condition of possibility for a richer, fuller mode of living, which it calls ‘round’ or ‘whatever’ life: a life that can be nurtured by dwelling in uncertainty as the antidote to algorithmic capture. The resistance I argue for coincides with the creation of a new art of living and calls for enablers – *stratagems* – that are conducive to (and aligned with) the conceptual frameworks of the inoperative, the non-instrumental, the amphibolic. To begin to illustrate the characteristics required by the stratagems I propose, such as adaptability, cunning and efficacy, the chapter introduces exit, opportunism and duplicity. It also highlights that they concern design. Thus, Part One concludes with a call for design to place not the human, not even the nonhuman and certainly not the user, but the plenitude of undifferentiated potential at its core – in short, a call for design to work by reaching out to the cosmic.

With Part Two *The Power of Maybes* changes tack. It moves from planetary computation to outlining the cosmological orientation that, I contend, is necessary to inhabit uncertainty as the generative space of uncaptured potential, prior to what algorithmic governmentality feeds on. **Chapter 4 – Metic Wayfinding** – swerves into the cosmic by mapping those key moments and ideas from Spinoza’s philosophy – his notion of nature and his ethics – and from pantheism that, taken together with the kind of intelligence that the ancient Greeks called *mētis*, constitute the wayfinding of the title. This cosmological orientation, informed by radical non-duality and by the coincidence of intelligent matter and sensible matter, is the basis of an ethical stance vital to a project of renewal, reparation and regeneration. It is this cosmological orientation, in other words, that I deem necessary to pursue in order to enter and dwell in uncertainty. Uncertainty, finally, is the topic of **Chapter 5 – Oceanic Uncertainty**. A deep dive into what uncertainty is, how it is thought about and which (and whose) are the stories told about it, this chapter examines uncertainty as a multifaceted

(and difficult to pinpoint) entity. It looks at how uncertainty is conceptualized and framed; at the relationship between uncertainty and creativity, and between uncertainty and risk. It discusses prevention, precaution and pre-emption as modes of anticipatory governance that seize uncertainty. It examines Heisenberg's principle and ideas around quantum uncertainty, drawing together the voices of the physicist (Rovelli) and the philosopher (Barad) to surface uncertainty as the entanglement of epistemological and ontological matters. What remains to be seen in detail are the stratagems that afford making friends with uncertainty by enacting a convergence of mode of knowing, acting and being that is the basis of an ethical wisdom (already outlined through my cosmological orientation). **Chapter 6 – Unknowing Stratagems** – takes up the challenge by framing its stratagems as modes of approaching the unknown also drawing on some instances of Chinese thinking. The chapter foregrounds the stratagems through the relationship between knowing and not-knowing, and by outlining the value of cultivating not-knowing, for instance through 'learned ignorance'. It then proceeds to describe the stratagems I propose to enter uncertainty and inhabit maybes: conjecture, divination, blur, vanishing into things, *wu wei*. The book closes with the **Conclusion: Whatever Designs**, which contains some reflections that connect the key ideas of the book to design and states the implications of my cosmological orientation for a potential-driven design ontology.

