

CHIMERAS

An abstract geometric pattern in purple lines on a black background. It consists of a grid of horizontal and vertical lines. Overlaid on this grid are various geometric shapes, including circles and triangles, formed by additional lines. Some lines are solid, while others are dashed. The pattern is symmetrical and repetitive, creating a complex, crystalline structure.

Inventory
of Synthetic Cognition

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ONASSIS
FOUNDATION

Groundlessness

by Constantinos Miltiadis & Miro Roman

Groundlessness refers to a condition in contemporary communication, where the actors do not share a common ground or an external reference but are still able to communicate by orienting themselves within the relative. Groundlessness is generic, synthetic, informational, and noisy; above the ground, but below the sky; a cloud; not dense enough, not empty. Cut by voids, the groundless gives space to synthetic figuration. Figures start to talk.

Groundless exchange is becoming increasingly prevalent in the recognition and realization of non-anthropocentric conceptions of contemporary epistemology at the perils of “discipline”. What is more, the intensification of computational technologies becomes fuel for the cognitive-cultural

economy, now an autocatalytic constellation itself. What cognitive-computational convergence, that the Turing Test and the “Chinese Room” foresaw, or what more practical examples like ELIZA (1966) demonstrated, is that stakeholder positions in a communicative context are not exclusive to biological intelligence, or grounded in “native”-natural language.

With information technologies today, all objects are talking. We refer to this vibrating potential as noise, or in other contexts as “fake news”. Here any argument is possible in an infinity of ways. Any two points can be related in any way to tell a story. If data is big enough, it will not tell us the truth, but it will show us the world we want to see. This is the paradox we face. It is not good or bad, but rather a different space without clear anchor points, or with an infinity of them.

Welcome to the generic. It, like noise, comes from everywhere. It fills the environment like sound and becomes the borderless background of everything present: a multiplicity of intensities, quantities, and qualities. It has the potential to contain anything if one can forge a key to unlock it. Cryptography is the compass to navigate it. This is the crypt and the key for articulating potentials into probabilities. Here lie our new materials, the intensities that manifest new qualities: wads, lots, treasures. Here signatures matter.

The only question that the generic asks is to concede with it, and the only place is from within

it. Talks in groundlessness proceed by leaving morals behind. The only ground is that of “good faith”, curiosity, and the presumption that the exchange will bear fruit. The same attitude is present when one addresses clouds, search engines, smart devices, humans, and anthropomorphic algorithms today, regardless of the precise nature of those sitting at the table, or the disclosure thereof.

Groundless conduct relies on trust in the exchange, and the articulation of new rituals.



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