Stochastic enumeration: we don't want methods but we do want to practice

oracle(s)
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> x=measurement, categorisation, extraction and optimisation.

we want to practice but we don't need methodologies. x=feeling, blurring, letting be, slowing down. blurred towards possible without naming it.

Algorithm

- 1. Select two texts to work with (this time we worked with *M Archive: After the End of the World* by Alexis Pauline Gumbs and our collective notes on our process and practices).
- 2. Select one or more dice, take time to select the dice, they may be your own, from a friend, specially aquired for this process. Dice with more sides and multiple dice will give you more options and less determinacy.
- 3. Choose one person to roll the dice and find something to roll the dice into. Close your eyes if you wish.
- 4. When its your turn, roll the dice when you feel. Repeat until you reach the number of rolls that feels right. (Or as a group you can set the number of rolls).
- 5. After each roll state whether the operator should be minuend, multiplicand, subtrahend, multiply, halt, commit, load, increment, decrement, addends, dividend, divisor, spin, invert, jump, or add and pop.
- 6. Run the calculation, use the sum to call the page line or page number from the first chosen text.
- 7. Repeat steps 2–5, this sum is used to call the page line or page number from the second chosen text.



- 8. Sit with the two pages and follow footnotes and annotations.
- 9. Begin to write together on a shared pad responding to the two texts, feel the edges of each other's workings through, attempt to lose track of who authored what.
- 10. Come back to the text after two months, attempt to annotate it, who wrote what, where did the texts sink into each other?

1

Oracle(s) comes from the quotidian practice of engaging with chance --- towards finding meaningful answers in a time when life chances for many are becoming foreclosed. Through a centering of and engagement with Black Feminist Poethics (da Silva) and inspired by the ongoing oracle praxis from Alexis Pauline Gumbs, oracle(s) assembles and engages an archive of texts, scents and sounds that act as divinatory and sacred tools for engaging in collective unknowing practices. Contrary to contemporary computational paradigms, we acknowledge the impossibility of subduing risk through modes of prediction. Instead we engage in oracle inspired practices (such as bibliomancy) that engage the queerness of risk as a poetic future text for emboldening our relations to each other within unpredictability. We understand that resonance, non-linearity and association are powerful practices within oracle(s) that might create a »skeleton architecture« (Lorde) collectively training us for a world that is anti-capitalist, anti-colonial, full of tunings and cusps and towards anti-oppressive otherwises.

We propose a manifestation of oracle(s) to collectively conjure and ask questions (»take 10 minutes to ask questions that make your heart shake ...«). These questions are posed to a shared oracle, which is always a book of poetry from a Black Feminist writer as a source to work with, not extract from. By staying with one text we practice a variety of ways to engage with Black Feminist thought that isn't extractive. We do this

5 towards finding proposals for us to practice in less oppressive ways, to shift and change our practices. Participants invite chance into the process by selecting pages from the text to guide their question. we then share in slow reading each passage that allows for thinking the world otherwise. These reading practices treat risk as an unavoidable feature of time and futurity that can generate intimacy and closeness through welcoming, weaving, writing, choosing, and intuiting together. Here, we publish our group poem, »apeiron«, as one response generated by the above oracle(s) algorithm. Below you will find each contributing author, their calculated sum using the algorithm, and the corresponding line from the shared notepad and passage from M Archive

Invoking a practice of speaking nearby (Trinh T. Minh-ha), without seizing or claiming, this poem navigates unpredictability and unknowing through collective processes that attend to the gaps and pauses and developing moments of presence and permission that can open up in nonlinear encounters. We practice surviving within the present order, sharing the task and responsibility of how we are going to communicate and understand within unknowability, and engage radical vulnerability to become undone together.

We are an ecotonal alluvium bridging across the Atlantic Ocean that consists of Loren Britton, Romi Ron Morrison, Helen Pritchard and Eric Snodgrass.

Calculations

Eric: [1]

 $5 \times 4 \times 3 + 2 + 2 + 4 = 68$

Line from pad: discusses in plenary what about the minority Page from *MArchive*:

»this time she put her face directly in the dirt. no glasses to remove. no precious hair to pull back. no back to

brace her to look up at the sky. just dirt. hard enough and soft enough to hold her. part of the day she pounded the earth with her fists and screamed blame and despair. part of the day she let soil slip through her fingers and felt comforted. most of the day she just acclimated herself to solid breathing and seeing all there was. which was brown. 30 « (Gumbs p.68)

Helen: [2]

 $4 + 5 \times 6 \times 2 + 4 = 68$

Line from pad: are located.

Page from MArchive:

»this time she put her face directly in the dirt. no glasses to remove. no precious hair to pull back. no back to brace her to look up at the sky. just dirt. hard enough and soft enough to hold her. part of the day she pounded the earth with her fists and screamed blame and despair. part of the day she let soil slip through her fingers and felt comforted. most of the day she just acclimated herself to solid breathing and seeing all there was. which was brown. 30 « (Gumbs p. 68)

Romi: [3]

 $(1 \times 4) + (1 \times 6 \times 5 \times 2) + 1 (-1 \times 1) = 64$

Line from pad: stay as close as possible to the text and the type.

Page from MArchive:

»everything told them it wasn't time. the tint of the soil. the nakedness of the sky. what had they done with the clouds? what had they done to their own breathing? what had they done to the ground? what could ever support them now?

the scouts from the ones waiting underground retreated back through the caves. the brave ones who had been sent to check were cleansed with mud and sweet touches when they returned, they closed their eyes and sang until their skin stopped hurting, until their lungs felt clean again, they let their voices echo off the walls.

this was their destiny. to wait and check, to let go of all of the what what what and to ask with their waiting, when? when would the earthwalkers be ready for depth?²⁷« (Gumbs p. 64)

Loren: [4]

 $(2 \times 1 \times 6 \times 4) + 4 + (5 \times 5 \times 5 \times 1) + 6 = 183$

Line from pad: Dear Olga,

Page from *MArchive*:

»they used wax. crayons across the paper on the floor and one of the last remaining record collections. they drew what they could remember in color. using sound to reach back because the world didn't smell like itself anymore. the oldest among them remembered landscapes of grass and drew flat and rolling greens from where they sat. and the younger the people got they more they remembered brown, and then more orange and then red. the planet itself had to signal stop in their symbolic codes. but by that time, what else could they do?

i like the footprints that the little ones tracked across the remembered outlines of where there used to be pipes. where the gas lines tracked through the cities, where the books had been held.

let's shape our new home in the contour of the last toddler footprints. in honor of the ones who walked away. 41 « (Gumbs p. 183)

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much though.
                                                      when everything told them
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              Dear, if you follow the edge of where its wrinkly wave you might
                                                                     it wasn't time
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              find a track. But the finding, and the keeping the feeling that
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              you've found it and can keep it now, well, that part is fleeting.
            111111111
                                             was the text they sang?
                                             what shapes they learned to make
                                             in covenants
                                             born from chorus
      pp pppp
                                                                                                                                              walking over to this corner....
                                                                                                                                                                                           ...a room to sit in
      00 0000
                                                                                                                                                                                            a book
                                                      when they sought the frigid places
                                                                                                                                                                                             this book
    S SS SSSS
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 we're here
                                                                                                                                                                                             "this time she put her face directly in the dirt"
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 bonded through dirt
  S SS SSSS
                                                      and bathed with the salt
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      and clay
 b b bb bbbb
                                                      blessed by
                                                                                                                                                                                            when the world of man, white flame
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 its flat
                                                      tears
                                                                                                                                                                                            puts you in the dirt
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             lots of drawing wax on the floor [3]
e e e ee eeee
                                                                                                                                                                                            your friends, your ancestors
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         did you want to go another way? [4]
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 and there?
                                                                                                                                                                                            provoked white flame
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               over here?
                                                                                           dear apeiron
                                             what is the point of refusal
                                                                                           dear Olga,
                                                                                                                                                                                            burning
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               when the wax sits under hands
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          a bond that makes either moot (debatable, disputed, made abstract)
                                             that stands alone
                                                                                                                                                                                             cast, casted, caster
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               it transfers [4]
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            distance as a poor shorthand for a change of scenery [3]
                                                                                                                                                                                            spell of whiteness
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           do you want to go somewhere? [4]
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          only the briefest stretches of continuity
                                                      when solitude is what you claim
                                                                                                                                                                                            down into the archive of dirt
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          free from taboo
                                                                         to escape
                                                                                                                                                                                            we turned
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             smooth over time, tell tell tell
                                                      when will we be ready?
                                                                                                                                                                                             underground,
                                                                                             didnt know what to do
                                                                                                                                                                                            digging for air
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         stolen time
                                                                                             cant you see
                                                                                                                                                                                            with others
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       in well worn creases [7]
                                                                                                                                                                                             this earthen book of the world
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          rituals against barriers [4]
                                              what are the stakes of staying
                                                                                              among us
                                                        ascloseaspossible
                                                                                              there was a fungus among us [4]
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           finding more access
                                                                                                                                                                                             sifting curled pages, tunnels carved from within and beyond the flame
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           every every day, removing of weights
            tttt
                                             what could ever support them now? [3]
                                                                                                                                                                                            seeing in the careful, sacred dark
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       will we be able to recognize them
            ууууу
                                                                                                      used to
                                                                                                                                                                                            altern acclimations, proximate belongings
                                                                                                                                                                                            a room to sit in, braced with breath, its collective risk
                                                                                                 my strewn drawings in
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       when they come?
            pppppp
                                                                                                                                                                                             just hard enough, and soft enough, to hold us [1]
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                arent they already with us, carefully wearing spaces anew now? [7]
                                                                                                                            how do we coax us into the habit of listening to each other they read in with the
                                                                                           because the world didn't smell on their face in soil
                                                                                                                                                                                                           slowing aclimating
                                                                                                                                                                                                                 resisting the hardening in the locating on in and within
                                                                                            like itself anymore, and we couldnt held by the edges [2]
                                                                                        smell anything without a slight tingle
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       when situating is collective
                                                                                      in the nose. The sensory impact built
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          when the soil is always holding
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            when they read — loud theyput soil on their tounge
                                                                                   up over time, not enough spoons for
                                                                                                                                                                                                                      It was like in the repeition of the action of feeling grains run through the hands
                                                                                 that day. Remembering vividly, Dear Olga.
                                                                                                                                                                                                                      and where the met the water where the sky and sea met [2] building a small pile next to the dip in the ground her face had left
                                                                               What we did was to keep our space hot alive and full
                                                                                 churning, hot to the touch, flat floppy but warm,
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            and when she returned to the same place later that afternoon a worms curled in that dip its sticky skin hyperturbating
                                                                               in constant transformation. The exhaustion was
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    so she made another dip in the ground with lips touchiing against the hot damp soil
                                                                                 close to the surface. Why didn't the measure become explained
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          her breath damp with despair
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            and when she returned to thatplace later in the evening water had pooled into the hole making it larger
                                                                                 more clearly?
                                                                                     Using rulers to measure rulers won't create unexpected
                                                                                   outcomes and the orange and the red exhaustion is burning
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     when she returned the next day she placed her face into the soil again this time just letting the tip of her toungue touch the dirt
                                                                            so too bright.
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             and she just stayed there for a while
                                                                                       somehow the lungs keep up, but just barely
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         a little longer
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       when she returned later in the afternoon there was another rounded indentation next to hers, and another and another
                                                                                             i'm smoking enough for us
                                                                                                        but if you have it, why stop? [4]
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           and she put her hand into each on of them softening as she did placing it onto the soil
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       perturbations of hand sized sortings
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       groups gathered in the dips at the municipal park and when she returned they were the depth of one or two buses
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       they went throught the city park by park placing their faces into the grassy slopes and dry leaves
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               they climbed down ladders into the dip and faces into the soil and quickly tunnels [2]
                                                                                                                  wax transforms solid, bodily liquid, gas
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         once there were enough dips from faces or from sitting and talking they would move to the next park
                                                                                                                   sounding out transformations impressing - it into my chest - the coming boundlessness
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           and then return the next day to observe the new dips in situ
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           observing the changes to the dips and counting them
                                                                                                                                                                           the current and ongoing bind
                               what else could they do?
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             they had a small reel of papers to count with [2]
                               they could stretch, feel their legs
                                                                                                                             what does it have to do with computing? [4]
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      the groups cared for their collection of dips
                               they could stretch, fill their lungs with breath
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           each group making a different way to feel the soil
                                                                                                                                records
                               they could feel into as much spaciousness as potential
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           some could just by pressing a toungue to the dip measure the change in depth and they began to discuss the differences in how to make the hand sized sortings
                                                                                                                                 collecting
                               they could stay, wait worry
                                                                                                                                  category
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             although the groups would also move to different parks different
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  and the comforting folds of the park floor
                                        and then they could walk away when it suited them no more. [1-2-3-4]
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         remotely they asked another to visit the dips when they were at a distance
                                                                                                                                 non-binary
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              imagining the comfort of placing their faces into the indentations
                                                                                                                                young
metal
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  and they asked each other to narrate that comfort of the indentations
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            and to remember the way the breathing softened as the soil held their face [2]
                                                                                                                                 erasure
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the frame of it was larger than an a4 split in half but not quite graspable by my hand

when fingering through its edge the wavy wrinkle remaines uneven its not an infrastructure, per say, but it can be used to scaffold

when you add water to it, it dissolves a bit,

loses its form and becomes chewy, doesn't taste like

a boundary, or edge

wait [1-2-3-4] [1+2+3+4]

8

References

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Further Reading

aftermath * the nth of letting go / P* training in the everday (new modes of living together), by oracle(s) Loren Britton, Romi Ron Morrison, Helen Pritchard and Eric Snodgrass

https://newalphabetschool.hkw.de/aftermaththe-nth-of-letting-go-p-training-in-theeverday-new-modes-of-living-togetherby-oracles/