

**Symposium: Critical Restoration Geographies**

**Restorative Infrastructures**

Julia Wagner

Graduate School of Geography

Clark University

Worcester, MA, USA

juwagner@clarku.edu

Our “Imagining + Planning” conversation took place in the pinch of several interrelated crises including the collapse of Texas’ utilities infrastructures, the extended taxing of the COVID-19 pandemic on global care infrastructures, and the interminable iterations of settler colonial and state violence. As often happens in moments of apparent breakdown (Star 1999), our attention was directed to infrastructures, the oft invisible systems, networks, and connections that serve as the foundation of the operations of everyday life. Breakdown identifies how, and for whom, infrastructures work. As we gathered, a gaggle of strangers in yet another digital meeting room, we asked: How do we create the infrastructures that facilitate the restoration(s) we need? Using these tired spaces to assess our future(s) required an imaginative relationship to our present conditions.

We asked after the relational practices that create space-times for restoration amidst a dominant infrastructural paradigm premised on the productive and perpetual circulation of people, products, and money for the benefit of the few (LaDuke and Cowen 2020). Of course, restorative redistributions are already underway. Cassie Thornton’s (2020) anti-capitalist healthcare infrastructure, termed “the hologram”, offers a set of performative practices that facilitate restoration by repurposing care-time. Modeled off Greek Solidarity Clinics, each

hologram is comprised of cohorts of three participants that attend to the long-term mental, physical, and social health of a fourth person. Each participant is likewise supported by another triad, creating an open network of attention oriented towards the permanent redistribution of care-time. Monday's are playfully and surreptitiously re-appropriated from "productive" time and re-allocated to care-time. Care, in this framework, is equitably distributed – each participant receives the care they need – but not directly reciprocated – as the structure works against commensurate exchange.

The hologram is reminiscent of the "care webs" articulated by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha (2018), which do not rely on a system of payment for professional services nor expect gratitude in exchange for charity, but rather establishes collective access through acts of solidarity and mutual accountability. Care webs ensure the survival of people for whom ableist physical and social infrastructures systematically fail. Though relationally speculative, both holograms and care webs occur in the make-shift material and virtual spaces of contact that already exist or can be readily provisioned when the moment arises. They innovate out of moments of breakdown to re-orient relationships towards restoration.

Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2020) reminds us that "what the world will become already exists in the fragments and pieces, experiments and possibilities including symbolic and material infrastructures on and through which we change everything". In the space of our virtual discussion on *Imagining + Planning*, we experimented with Helen Richardson's (2021) provocation of "imagination as infrastructure". What this notion suggests for me is that moments of failure point to relational rupture as much as material breakdown. When we cannot immediately refigure the material components of infrastructure systems we can *re-orient our uses* of them to experiment and establish a relational praxis of restoration (Ahmed 2006, 2019; Berlant 2016). Imagination is creative work to re-align and restore one's relationships to spaces, things, others.

## References

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