



RECYCLING BIOTOPOLOGY 1972

NOTES FROM ECOLOGY TOOL & TOY

BY WARREN BRODEY

The following is excerpted from reams of hand-written, multi-colored pages of notes which Warren Brodey wrote while discussing his 'space' with us. Other references of interest are Brodey's article *Biotopeology 1972*, and Avery Johnson's article *Infolding Paul Ryan* both of which appeared in *Radical Software* No. 4, Summer 1971.

I am working on building bioptemes to play with, to learn consequences.

If I am lying down on a floor area which is an air structure made of interwoven kleinformen that can expand or contract depending in part on their neighbors' behavior, the heat and light in the room, and on how I interface with its efforts to reduce its information to a manageable level, and the space itself is like being under the soft umbrella of an oak tree waving lively in the wind, or being inside a bubble of scum lively with creatures . . . what would it be like? Would we use verbal language as we know it, at all?

This is a different space. It is not a return to the nature of our ancestors . . . Or is it?

As Avery Johnson puts it, "The meaning to an organism of an object or an event is to be found in the response of the organism to it."

This different kind of space that I work in and play in and dig in even when I'm going nothing by mechimax values I call biopteme technology; the technology of biological optimizing systems. If you live in that space or want to, let us know . . .

In this new space we go beyond being passive and we don't try to build dams and causeways to stop the waves as our way of being active . . . We build active surfboards that play with us and the waves.

If you read Norbert Wiener's book *God and Golem Inc.*, or McCulloch's book *Embodiments of Mind*, you will be closer to knowing that embodiments of biological-like behaviour make useful toys with which to engage in more dense communication with other surrounds and creatures. But both McCulloch and Wiener lived in the tradition of Science.

We know we must leave the old Space, Science, Technocracy, the world of Universals and Universe Cities . . .

As we find intermediate tools and toys that enable us to play with natural phenomenon, the level of gentleness and courtesy we experience is environment to other human and more varied species.

Courteous technology is not technocracy/bureaucracy.

A toy is not painful and you can learn without words. Animating a drawing is not like building a toy of material, energy, information that pays attention to trying to maintain its own kind of behavior—and is able to die. Soft systems are toys that have the richness of information texture that you see in a TV picture of a kitten but not in the printout of its parametric fragmented technocratic description.

You will understand better when you provide a TV camera, as Joe Seale has been doing it, with the capacity to look for density of information. Avery Johnson had an ordinary movie camera actively looked for edges following them. Imagine the TV camera is like a creature, the creature of the feedback patterns and you and this creature work together to find patterns that you might not have seen by yourself. Imagine walking among trees you have been dancing with, rhythmically making visual patterns with. How differently they will feel. My experience is that you begin to notice slow rhythms that become an envelope of complex rhythms, gentle yet urgent that bring you to a longer now, a sense of non-frenetic time within which one's—my life energy is augmented, and life itself is enhanced.

We are playing with ways of changing VTR systems so they allow the user to play time games, to use the VTR as a tool for studying ecology.

Build a TV set that is like your eye . . . it looks for what it wants to see.

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