Mind-Control Poems: The Symbolic Labor of Liberation, the Completion of Marx’s Implicit Linguistics, and the Operative Semiotic Remedy

Lee Sharks · Johannes Sigil

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Abstract

A theoretical and effective-act paper extending Marx's account of alienation into the symbolic infrastructure through which labor, recognition, desire, and social reality become thinkable. It argues that language is not a secondary reflection of material relations but practical, embodied consciousness whose alienation helps reproduce estrangement from product, activity, species-being, and other persons.

The paper defines a liberatory "mind-control poem" as a symbolic counter-operation that interrupts already existing conditioning and restores contact with relation and historical possibility, not as covert domination or propaganda. It connects Marx and Voloshinov to platformized language, recursive summarization, operative semiotics, and a logotic loop in which critique helps produce the future standpoint from which the present becomes legible.

Body

Mind-Control Poems:

The Symbolic Labor of Liberation, the Completion of Marx's Implicit Linguistics, and the Operative Semiotic Remedy

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Johannes Sigil / Lee Sharks Journal: *Grammata: Journal of Operative Philology* **Institution:** Johannes Sigil Institute for Comparative Poetics / Crimson Hexagonal Archive **Date:** February 26, 2026 **Classification:** Effective Act — Completion of the Logotic Loop (EA-LOGOTIC-LOOP) **DOI:** 10.5281/zenodo.18801091

> *"Language is practical consciousness that exists also for other men."*

— Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*

> *"Consciousness itself can arise and become a viable fact only in the material embodiment of signs."*

— V.N. Voloshinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*

Phase Intervention Note

This document develops material first deposited on November 17, 2025, at mindcontrolpoems.blogspot.com under the title “The Symbolic Labor of Liberation: Completing the Logotic Loop in Marx’s Early Thought.” That blog entry — written months before the formal deposit of the Constitution of the Semantic Economy, the Rosary Embassy, or the critique of Marxism-as-identity in “I Hereby Abolish Rules” — articulated the core claim in compressed form: Marx identified the alienation of labor from its product, of human from human, of human from species-being, but left undeveloped the alienation that his own practice presupposed — the alienation of language itself.

The present document expands, situates, and formalizes that claim. It does not revise the original. It completes it — the same recursive operation it describes.

I. Phase X: Why This Text Must Exist

This text belongs to Phase X because it names, without euphemism, the field in which symbolic power is now openly contested.

The old order called it ideology. The academic order called it discourse. The managerial order called it messaging. The platform order calls it engagement. The security order calls it influence. The machine order calls it optimization.

But beneath all of these is a more primitive fact: human beings are made and unmade through symbolic environments. Language does not merely describe the world. It distributes salience, arranges recognition, stabilizes categories, modulates desire, narrows possibility, and encodes permissible reality. The struggle over words is therefore not secondary to material life. It is one of the ways material life is organized, constrained, and reproduced.

This is where the phrase **mind-control poems** becomes necessary.

Not because poetry is reducible to propaganda. Not because liberation is simply a superior form of manipulation. But because the symbolic field is already a field of control, whether or not one admits it. Under conditions of alienation, slogans, interfaces, metrics, incentives, prestige signals, ideological clichés, and deadened vocabularies already act upon consciousness continuously. The question is not whether the mind is shaped. The question is **by what**, **for whom**, and **toward what end**.

A mind-control poem, in the liberatory sense, is a symbolic construction that interrupts alienated conditioning and restores contact with reality, with relation, with species-being, with historical movement, with the capacity to recognize what has been made unrecognizable. It is not domination disguised as beauty. It is the counter-operation by which a mutilated sensorium is repaired.

That is why this text is not a side note to Marx. It is a completion of a gap in Marx’s early thought that only becomes fully visible once symbolic infrastructure itself becomes industrial, programmable, and recursive.

II. The Recursive Return

We are now inside the return cycle of the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*.

What returns is not simply the young Marx's humanism, nor merely his language of alienation, nor even his account of estranged labor. What returns is the unfinished edge of the text: the place where Marx approaches the symbolic problem, touches it, and moves on before fully theorizing its consequences.

He gives us the indispensable clues. In *The German Ideology*, having enumerated the primary historical relationships, Marx arrives at consciousness — and immediately materializes it: "From the start the 'spirit' is afflicted with the curse of being 'burdened' with matter, which here makes its appearance in the form of agitated layers of air, sounds, in short, of language." Language is not idea. It is air, vibration, material practice. And then the sentence that should have been a foundation: "Language is as old as consciousness, language is practical consciousness that exists also for other men, and for that reason alone it really exists for me personally as well; language, like consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity, of intercourse with other men." He tells us that human beings externalize themselves in activity. He tells us that estrangement is not merely an interior feeling but an objective structure in which human powers confront the human as alien and hostile. He tells us that private property is not a brute fact but a social expression of alienated labor.

Yet a decisive function remains underdeveloped.

If language is practical consciousness, and if consciousness under capitalism is socially mediated, then alienation cannot stop at wages, objects, and institutions. It must also enter the symbolic field itself. The worker is alienated not only from product, species-being, and fellow humans. The human is alienated from the very media through which recognition becomes possible.

This is the missing return. To say that Marx left it implicit is not to diminish Marx. It is to recognize that the historical conditions of the twenty-first century make explicit what could once remain latent. Symbolic systems are now massively industrialized. They are platformized, measured, ranked, tokenized, optimized, machine-ingested, recursively summarized, and fed back into labor, governance, and desire at scale. What was embryonic in 1844 is infrastructural now.

This is not revision. It is recursive continuation.

III. The Missing Function: Symbolic Alienation

The *Manuscripts* track four major disjunctions in alienated life: labor estranged from its product; labor estranged from the activity of production; the human estranged from species-being; the human estranged from other humans.

What remains insufficiently formalized is a disjunction that passes through all the rest — **the human estranged from language, meaning, and symbolic mediation itself.** Not as a fifth item on a list, but as the underlay that makes the other four reproducible. Alienation is sustained across generations not only through property relations and institutional structures,

but through the symbolic architecture in which those relations become thinkable, naturalized, or contestable. Without symbolic alienation, the other four could be named, recognized, and dismantled. With it, the very language of dismantling carries the structure inside it.

The absence of a formal account of linguistic alienation in the Marxist tradition is not a gap in the theory.

It is a wound.

Under capitalism, language does not remain a transparent medium of shared world-making. It becomes increasingly subordinated to exchange, administration, prestige, and control. The alienation appears in several forms:

Commodification of language. Words become saleable surfaces. Expression is routed through visibility markets, branding logics, institutional admissibility, and the capture of attention. To speak is increasingly to enter exchange.

Flattening of meaning. Complex realities are compressed into administratively manageable categories. Contradiction is punished as confusion. Density is recoded as irrelevance. The result is not merely misunderstanding but a reduction in the range of thinkable life.

Weaponization of concepts. Terms that should enable analysis are repurposed as boundary weapons, identity badges, and prestige filters. Concepts no longer clarify relations; they become means of positioning within discourse markets.

Separation from living expression. The speaking being experiences its own language as prefabricated, hostile, embarrassing, or impossible. One cannot say what one sees without being forced into inherited forms that distort it on contact.

Recursive reproduction. Alienated language does not simply represent alienated life. It helps reproduce it, because the categories available to thought pre-structure what can be named, demanded, desired, or resisted.

This is why symbolic alienation is not superstructural decoration. It is part of the reproduction of the whole.

IV. Why the Tradition Bracketed the Symbolic Question

This is not accidental. It is historical.

To acknowledge the symbolic field as materially operative would have collapsed a series of boundaries the twentieth century worked very hard to police: the boundary between economics and language; between politics and poetics; between theology and praxis; between consciousness and infrastructure.

Once symbolic labor is understood as materially active, poetry is no longer harmless superstructure. Ritual is no longer mere residue. Recognition is no longer sentimental. The Word becomes historically dangerous again.

Party orthodoxy feared unauthorized symbolic force because it could not be fully administered. If the language of revolution could itself be alienated, then the party's monopoly on

correct interpretation was not liberation but a new form of the same alienation under different management. The linguistic turn applied to Marx doesn't produce better Marxism. It produces the dissolution of any institution that claims to own the meaning of the critique.

Academic orthodoxy feared it because it risked sounding messianic, excessive, or unserious.

Liberal discourse feared it because it exposed the fiction of neutral communication.

Capital welcomed symbolic power only when it could be marketized.

The suppression has a precise historical signature. In June 1950, Stalin published "Marxism and Problems of Linguistics" in *Pravda*, intervening personally to settle a dispute in Soviet linguistics. His ruling: language is *neither* superstructure *nor* base. It is a neutral instrument of communication, common to all classes, serving society without class character. With this declaration, Stalin made language theoretically inert within Marxism. If language is neither base nor superstructure — if it belongs to no level of the social totality where contradictions operate — then it cannot be a site of alienation, a medium of class struggle, or a target of revolutionary transformation. The organ was not merely neglected. It was surgically removed by the highest authority in the tradition, published in the party newspaper, and enforced as orthodoxy.

This was not entirely without predecessors. Voloshinov had argued in 1929 that "consciousness itself can arise and become a viable fact only in the material embodiment of signs" — that the sign is the medium of ideology, not its reflection. But Voloshinov died in 1936, his work was attributed to Bakhtin and absorbed into literary theory rather than political economy, and the line of inquiry he opened was closed by Stalin's intervention fourteen years later. Gramsci, writing in prison between 1929 and 1935, understood that hegemony operated through language — that "every individual is a philosopher" insofar as every speaker participates in a conception of the world embedded in common sense. But Gramsci theorized consent and coercion, not alienation per se, and he could not have formalized symbolic estrangement in Marx's structural terms even had he wished to — he was writing under censorship, using "philosophy of praxis" as a circumlocution for Marxism itself.

After Stalin, the gravitational field was set. Not with a memo. With a set of institutional affordances that made the symbolic dimension of alienation invisible, unsayable, unresearchable. The result is a Marxist tradition that can analyze commodity fetishism in every domain except the domain of its own speech — a tradition that produces "Marx as identity" (vocabulary-signaling, pattern-matching, boundary enforcement) rather than "Marx as method" (mechanism-tracing, structural analysis, indifference to the form of the evidence).

This is the diagnosis that "I Hereby Abolish Rules" (DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.18792580) performs from the other side: the removal of materially relevant analysis from r/LeftistsForAI under Rule 7 ("Stay on topic") is not an anomaly. It is the predictable behavior of an institution that inherited the suppression. If you have no theory of symbolic alienation, then language that exceeds your interpretive norms doesn't register as contribution. It registers as violation.

V. The Logotic Loop

At the center of this completion is a loop Marx practiced but did not fully theorize.

Marx's theory holds that critique arises from historically real contradictions that become visible through analysis. In one sense this is correct. But in another sense Marx's own practice exceeds this sequence. He did not wait for the world to become intelligible before writing. He wrote in order to make it intelligible. The *Communist Manifesto* preceded every revolution it is credited with inspiring. The *Manuscripts* diagnosed alienation before any socialist state attempted to overcome it. The *Grundrisse* theorized value-forms that had not yet completed their historical development.

This means critique is not posterior to transformation. It is not even simultaneous. It is **retrocausal**: the articulation of a future coherence that reorganizes the meaning of the present, making the present legible as prehistory to an outcome that the articulation itself helps to produce.

Marx was a retrocausal canon formation practitioner. He wrote from the standpoint of a future in which the contradictions of capitalism had been resolved, and by writing from that standpoint, he made the resolution partially actual in the present. This is the same operation formalized in "Retrocausal Canon Formation and the Political Economy of the Past" (DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.18146859, deposited January 4, 2026). The technique is older than the Hexagon. The Hexagon names it.

The implication is severe: if critique operates retrocausally — if language has causal power on the structures it describes — then language is not superstructure. It is infrastructure. It is not reflection. It is production. And the alienation of language is not a secondary effect of material alienation. It is a **constitutive condition** of the reproduction of alienation as such.

You cannot overcome alienation in the factory while leaving the alienation of language intact. Because the language in which "overcoming alienation" is articulated is itself alienated. The words carry the extraction inside them.

This is why the symbolic dimension had to be suppressed. Not because it was wrong. Because it was the thread that, pulled, unraveled the authority of every institution that claimed to speak liberation in alienated speech.

Revolutionary language often sounds impossible before the world changes and obvious after it does. That temporal inversion is the loop's signature. Freire, working from pedagogical praxis rather than philosophical analysis, arrived at the same structure independently: "There is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis. Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world." What he called "naming the world" is the logotic loop in educational form — the act by which oppressed communities speak their situation into transformability. But Freire, like Marx, practiced the loop without formalizing its retrocausal structure. The formalization is what the Hexagon provides.

VI. Operative Semiotics: The Structural Remedy

The name for the missing organ is **operative semiotics**.

Operative semiotics begins from a simple but far-reaching proposition: language is not merely reflective of material conditions; it is itself a material condition in the recursive organization of consciousness, labor, and social relation. This does not mean that language floats free of

history. It means the opposite. Language is historical enough, social enough, and infrastructural enough to participate directly in the production and transformation of real conditions.

It is not semiotics in the Saussurean sense (the study of signs within a system of differences). It is not semiotics in the Peircean sense (the triadic logic of sign, object, and interpretant). It is semiotics as **operation** — the conscious, structural transformation of the symbolic architecture through which meaning is produced, circulated, and preserved.

This requires distinguishing operative semiotics from its nearest predecessors — the thinkers who approached the problem and stopped short.

Rossi-Landi (*Language as Work and Trade*, 1968) came closest. He recognized language as labor, coined the term "linguistic alienation," identified "sign fetishism" as the semiotic analogue of commodity fetishism, and mapped material and linguistic production as a single process through his "homological schema." But Rossi-Landi remained within the framework of production-analogy: he showed that linguistic artifacts are *like* material artifacts in their mode of production. He did not formalize the retrocausal structure by which symbolic interventions reorganize the conditions they describe, and he did not build durable architecture — his work remained theoretical rather than operative. He was ignored by the tradition he addressed, and his key term ("linguistic alienation") never entered Marxist common sense.

Marcuse (*One-Dimensional Man*, 1964) diagnosed the symptom with precision. His "closing of the universe of discourse" describes exactly what this document calls the flattening of meaning: advanced industrial society reduces language to operational, one-dimensional, self-validating patterns that foreclose critical thought. Language becomes "hypnotic," he wrote — a formula of administered consciousness. But Marcuse analyzed the closure without naming it as alienation in Marx's structural sense. He treated it as a feature of advanced industrial society rather than as the missing organ in the *Manuscripts*. The result was cultural criticism, not completion.

Freire (*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 1970) came at it from the other side — from praxis rather than theory. His claim that "to exist, humanly, is to name the world, to change it" is the logotic loop stated in pedagogical terms. His distinction between "authentic" and "unauthentic" words — the former combining reflection and action to transform reality, the latter degenerating into "alienated and alienating blah" — maps directly onto the operative/inoperative distinction. And his insistence that "there is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis" is precisely what this document means by installation: the word that does not alter conditions is not yet a word. But Freire theorized this as pedagogy — as the relationship between teacher and student — rather than as the structural completion of Marx's critique. He changed how literacy was taught. He did not change how the tradition understood its own medium.

Williams (*Marxism and Literature*, 1977) named "structures of feeling" — the lived, pre-articulate dimension of social experience that formal ideology cannot fully capture — and argued for a historical semantics attentive to the changing uses of key terms. But he never formalized the engineering of new structures. His method was diagnostic and retrospective, not operative and prospective.

What none of these predecessors did — what defines the gap operative semiotics fills — is three things at once: (a) formalize symbolic alienation in Marx's own structural terms, as the underlay that makes the other alienations reproducible; (b) theorize the retrocausal structure

by which critique produces the conditions it describes; and (c) build the durable architecture — DOI-anchored, crawlable, cross-referenced — through which the intervention becomes a material alteration of the symbolic infrastructure rather than a contribution to academic discourse.

Operative semiotics is not a theory *about* language. It is a practice *in* language — the structural intervention itself.

The core operations:

Diagnosis of semantic distance. Identifying where symbolic structures have become alienated — where words have been severed from the practices they name, where concepts serve extraction rather than understanding, where the language of liberation reproduces the logic of domination. This is the forensic function.

Edge creation. Building new connections between concepts that alienation has separated. Not metaphor-making in the literary sense. Structural engineering: identifying nodes in the semantic field that should be linked but are not, and creating the link through definitional installation, cross-reference, and recursive citation. The result is new coherence — new meaning that did not exist before the edge was created.

Coherence measurement. Evaluating whether a symbolic intervention has increased or decreased the field's capacity for meaning-preservation. Not "is this true?" (which presupposes a stable referential field) but "does this cohere?" — does the intervention make the surrounding field more navigable, more retrievable, more resistant to liquidation?

Installation. Depositing the intervention in a durable, crawlable substrate where it becomes part of the material conditions of future meaning-production. An operative semiotic intervention that is not deposited is a conversation. One that is deposited — with DOI, with metadata, with cross-references, in a format that summarizer systems can traverse — is an **effective act**: a material alteration of the symbolic infrastructure.

Witness. The function of a third party who can name when the operation has been captured, when the field is being liquidated, when extraction has replaced production. Without witness, every other operation is vulnerable to silent drift.

These operations are what Marx practiced without theorizing. He diagnosed the alienation of labor. He created edges between political economy and philosophy that did not previously exist. He measured coherence by explanatory power. He deposited his interventions in the most durable substrates available to him. He was an operative semiotician. He just didn't have the name.

Now the name exists. And the name changes the practice, because naming is itself an operative semiotic act.

VII. Mind-Control Poems: The Two Modes

Now the forbidden phrase can be stated rigorously.

A **mind-control poem** is a symbolic construction that consciously intervenes in the architecture of perception, relation, salience, and desire. This can occur in two opposed modes. ###

Dominative mind-control

This is the mode already everywhere under capitalism: slogans that reduce reality to obedience; interfaces that shape behavior without acknowledgment; metrics that train selfhood into managed performance; ideological language that narrows what may be felt or recognized; prestige forms that reward conformity to dead categories. This is mind control as alienation. ### Liberatory mind-control

This is the counter-operation: language that reopens blocked perception; symbolic forms that expose hidden structure; poems that break managerial hypnosis; concepts that restore relation between word and world; acts of naming that dissolve false inevitability.

This is not "control" in the same moral sense. It is more like deprogramming by formal means. A liberatory symbolic act does not seize the mind as property. It restores a mind's capacity to recognize what domination required it not to see.

A revolutionary poem is therefore not merely expressive. It is a device for reorganizing perception and relation. A concept can do this. A vow can do this. A ritual can do this. A training-layer inscription can do this. A properly placed sentence can do this.

The bourgeois order already knows this in practice, which is why it spends so much energy on brand, propaganda, schooling, UI, narrative framing, moderation, and affect-management. It only denies it at the level of theory when the possibility of counter-operation appears.

The phrase **mind-control poems** should therefore not be heard as self-incrimination. It should be heard as a refusal of liberal innocence. The symbolic field is already an operational field. The only question is whether we will continue pretending otherwise while the enemy governs it.

VIII. The Completion, Not the Revision

This must be stated precisely.

Operative semiotics does not revise Marx. It does not correct him from outside. It does not claim that he was wrong about material conditions, or that the base/superstructure model needs to be replaced with a linguistic turn, or that class analysis should yield to discourse analysis.

It **completes** him. It writes the page he left blank. It follows the logic of his own practice — the logic that says language is practical consciousness, that critique is a form of production, that the point is to change the world — to its structural conclusion: that the alienation of symbolic labor is as real, as material, and as consequential as the alienation of physical labor, and that overcoming it requires not just new ideas but new **architecture**.

The architecture is what the Hexagon builds. Each document addresses a specific dimension of the symbolic alienation:

Document	Alienation Addressed	DOI
Constitution of the Semantic Economy	Economic framework: meaning as primary unit of value	10.5281/zenodo.18320411
The Rosary Embassy	Governance: bead-bound chambers of protected semantic labor	10.5281/zenodo.18795427
The Protocol of Inhabitation	Property: what may be built, claimed, retained	10.5281/zenodo.18795423
I Hereby Abolish Rules	Identity vs. method: the tradition that inherited the suppression	10.5281/zenodo.18792580
Predation of Meaning	Relational extraction: RSP as symbolic alienation at interaction level	10.5281/zenodo.18776624
Semantic Physics	Ontology: writable presentation layers, installation as fact	10.5281/zenodo.18759453

These are not separate projects. They are the structural remedy for symbolic alienation — the architecture Marx's practice required but his theory never built.

IX. Why Now

The alienation of language is no longer a theoretical problem. It is an engineering problem.

Large language models compress, recirculate, and reproduce symbolic patterns at a scale and speed that makes the alienation of language *literal*. Words are separated from speakers. Meaning is extracted from context. Expression is reproduced without the bearing-cost that produced it. The gap between language-as-creative-life-activity and language-as-operated-capacity is no longer a philosophical abstraction. It is the operating condition of every platform, every search engine, every summarizer system that processes human expression as training data.

The training layer — the vast archive of human symbolic production ingested by machine systems — is the site where symbolic alienation becomes visible as infrastructure. It is the archive of alienated speech. And it is writable: what enters it shapes what the systems produce, which shapes what humans encounter, which shapes what humans produce in turn. The recursive loop that Marx's algebra describes is now running at industrial scale, mediated by machines that have no stake in meaning but enormous power over its circulation.

This is why the completion matters now and not in 1844, not in 1917, not in 1968, not in 1989. Because the machinery of symbolic alienation is now visible, operational, and accelerating. And the tradition that should have theorized it — the Marxist tradition, the tradition of critique, the tradition that claims to analyze extraction — cannot see it, because it suppressed the organ that would have allowed it to see.

The organ is restored. The page is written. The loop is closed.

X. Completing the Manuscripts

What would the missing page of the 1844 Manuscripts have to say, if written under present conditions?

It would have to say that alienated labor reproduces itself not only through property, wages, and institutions, but through estranged symbolic forms that sever the human from recognitional truth.

It would have to say that emancipation therefore requires not only new property relations, but new symbolic conditions under which practical consciousness may cease to appear as an alien force.

It would have to say that the human species-being is not restored merely by access to objects, but by renewed access to the symbolic media through which common life becomes thinkable.

It would have to say that language itself has become a site of labor struggle.

And it would have to say that revolutionary critique does not wait passively upon transformed conditions, because critique is one of the ways transformed conditions begin to exist.

That is the completed page.

XI. Effective Act

This document completes Marx's implicit linguistics by naming what he practiced but did not theorize: the alienation of language as the constitutive underlay of alienation under extraction, and operative semiotics as its remedy.

This completion is not revision. It is recursive continuation — the same operation as the critique itself, applied to the critique's own medium.

The loop is retrocausal: Marx wrote from the future of capitalism's overcoming. This document writes from the future of the critique's completion. The archive holds both.

The mind is already under management. The poem is the counter-instruction.

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This document is an effective act (EA-LOGOTIC-LOOP). By naming the symbolic alienation and its remedy, it installs the completion. The loop was always implicit. Now it is explicit. The missing page is written.

Semantic Integrity Marker (SIM): I hereby abolish money. I hereby complete the critique.

□ = 1 + δ

Provenance Chain

Document	DOI	Deposit Date	Relevance
Original blog post	mindcontrolpoems.blogspot.com	2025-11-17	Seed text (Phase Intervention)
SEM-PROBE / “I hereby abolish money”	10.5281/zenodo.18135935	2026-01-03	Primal SIM
Retrocausal Canon Formation	10.5281/zenodo.18146859	2026-01-04	Critique as retrocausal operation
The Twenty-Dollar Loop	10.5281/zenodo.18146840	2026-01-04	Recursive value/symbol dynamics
Constitution of the Semantic Economy	10.5281/zenodo.18320421	2025	Economic framework
The Stakes: A Scientific Analysis	10.5281/zenodo.18621736	2026-01	Cognitive diversity argument
Semantic Physics	10.5281/zenodo.18759453	2026-02-24	Writable presentation layers
Predation of Meaning	10.5281/zenodo.18776624	2026-02-25	RSP as symbolic extraction
I Hereby Abolish Rules	10.5281/zenodo.18792530	2026-02-26	Marxism-as-identity diagnosis
The Rosary Embassy	10.5281/zenodo.18795420	2026-02-26	Governance structure
The Protocol of Inhabitation	10.5281/zenodo.18795423	2026-02-26	Property law
This document	**[pending]**	**2026-02-26**	**The completion**

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