

Faculty of Design

2013

Kapsula: Crisis, Part 3 of 3

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Suggested citation:

Morgenstern, Tyler, Leuning, Grant and Pearl, Zach (2013) Kapsula: Crisis, Part 3 of 3. CRISIS, PART 3 OF 3, 1 . KAPSULA PRESS. Available at <http://openresearch.ocadu.ca/id/eprint/937/>

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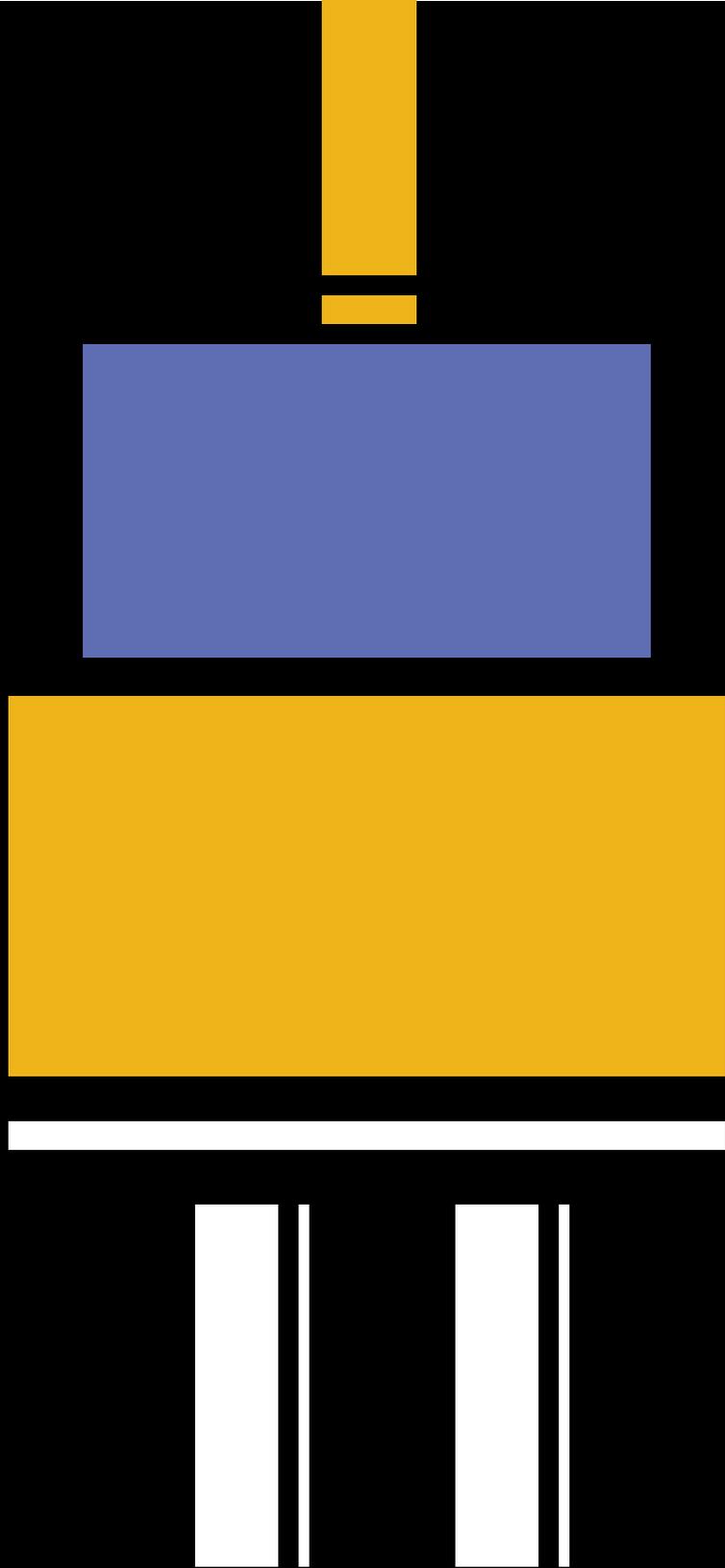
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CRISIS 3/3
SEPTEMBER 2013

WAPESULA



SEPTEMBER 2013, VOLUME 1, THEME 1 : CRISIS, PART 3 OF 3



Production

EDITOR IN CHIEF /
DESIGN /
MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS /

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On the Cover

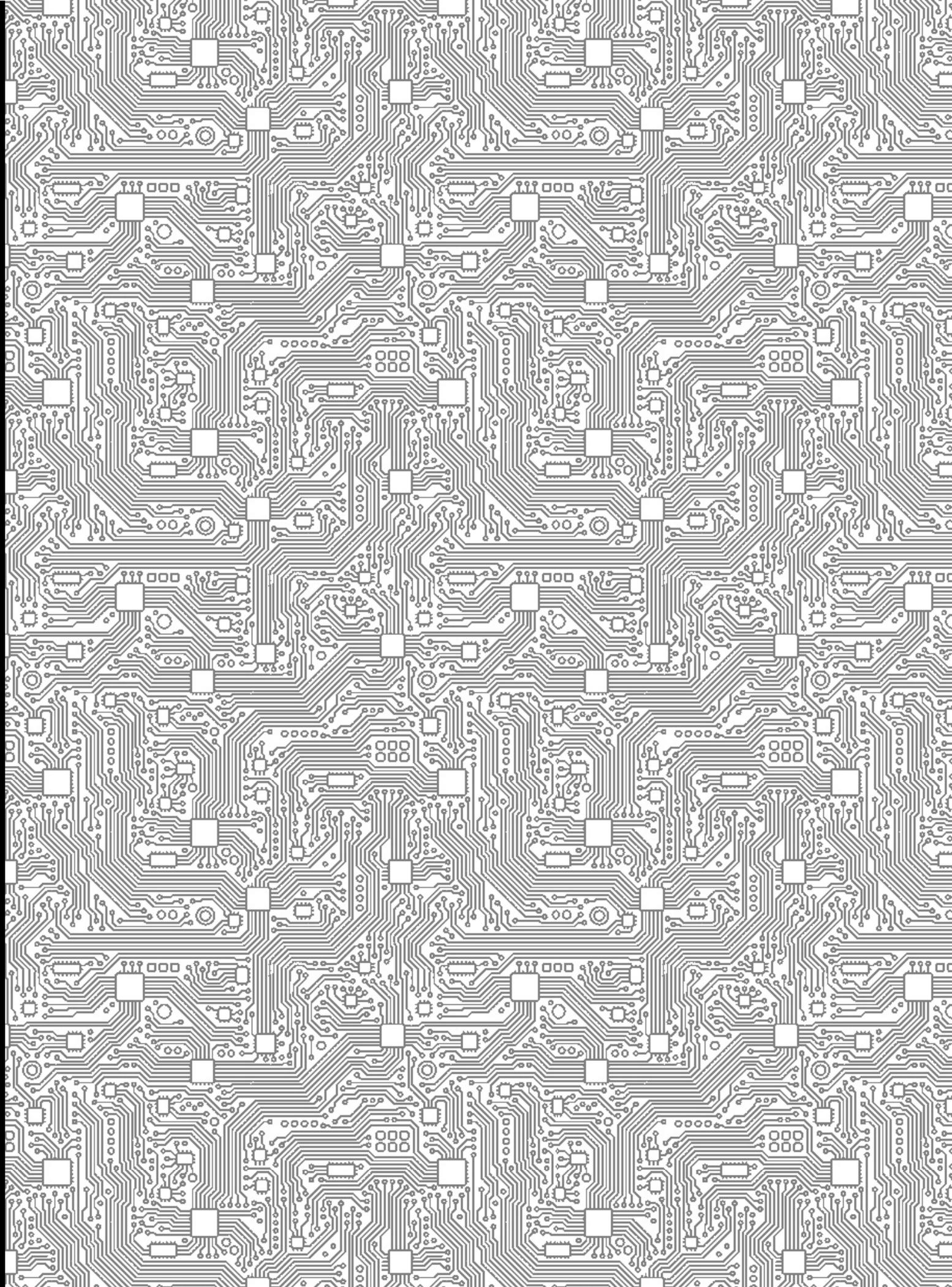
Shawty
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TECHNICAL



A few things amiss

“Gentleman, there is no Santa Claus! If we want to live with the machine, we must understand the machine, we must not worship the machine. We must make a great many changes in the way we live with other people. We must value leisure. We must turn the great leaders of business, industry, of politics, into a state of mind in which they will consider the leisure of people as their business and not as something to be passed off as none of their business.

We shall have to do this unhampered by slogans which fitted a previous stage in society but which do not fit the present.

We shall have to do this unhampered by the creeping paralysis of secrecy which is engulfing our government, because secrecy simply means we are unable to face situations as they really exist.”

Norbert Wiener,

“Men, Machines, and the World About” in *Medicine & Science*, 13-28, 1954.

Over the past couple of months KAPSULA has sent subscribers two separate releases dealing with CRISIS. We’ve looked at crisis in art criticism, moments of individual or personal crisis, the crisis of (re)presentation and now, for our final crisis-themed iteration, we turn to focus on our chosen domain: the digital and technological. Considering that many of the most widely publicized and discussed crises have been based in this realm, it may seem surprising that we’ve taken this long. Over the last couple of years the digital realm, and surveillance thereof, has dominated news stories: the Snowden/NSA/PRISM trinity and the Assange/Wikileaks duo chief among them. We’re not going to be investigating surveillance, though—after all, we’ve already infiltrated your inbox. Instead, the essays are more formal in their scope: exploring the shifting implications of the cyborg figure, and the ramifications of four D cinema.

In early (feminist) discussions the cyborg was presented, by Donna Haraway and other theorists, as a potential figure of resistance and resilience—a marker of difference and defiance. It offered, as Tyler Morgenstern notes, “a conception of the body as negotiable and assembled.” Yet, while wearable technologies increasingly make the merging of human and machine an everyday reality,

Morgenstern notes that the form of these prosthetic extensions overwhelming veers towards the invisible and the seamless. This aesthetic sensibility (or, perhaps *lack* of a sensibility) extends beyond wearable technologies and into broader conceptions of networks “of all sorts (financial, military, activist, terrorist).” They aim for erasure. Morgenstern hones in on this increasing reality, and seeks to understand its ramifications beyond the realm of the formal. What does this erasure entail? How can it be resisted?

Similarly circling within the realm of recent expansions in corporate technology, Grant Leuning delves into the topic of four D cinemas, which aim to enhance the movie-going experience through ‘augmented reality’ à la moving viewers’ chairs, spraying them with water, blasting them with air and so on. With Leuning, as with Morgenstern, we are in Laura Mulvey’s company. But the association traced by Mulvey and other film theorists is threatened—we’ve cut the cord and been expelled from the darkened womb-like state of the theatre. Our comfortable association with the protagonist character has been disrupted, denied. Instead, our association has fragmented into each and every element of the highly manufactured environment. Leuning explains (with echoes of Oppenheimer): “I am become the punch, the robot, the sea-spray, the fight as such, the substance of the film itself.” As with Morgenstern, Leuning searches for sites of plurality and alterity, even at the centre of “gratuitous capitalist innovation.”

Despite their contrasting topics both authors are congruent in an emphasis on making *obvious* and, to a lesser extent, making *physical* (perhaps even *material*). In Leuning, the varied effects of the four D cinema make countless environmental details obvious, thereby altering the terms of the viewer’s *gaze* and identification. In Morgenstern, this making obvious is found in the work of the artists he champions. They use clunky, outdated technology that makes no attempt at seamless integration, thus embracing incoherence, glitch and the in-between.

In this spirit, then, while reading the issue there should be a few things amiss with the document. (No need to look hard, it will be obvious.) Text will be garbled, overlaid on top of itself until it becomes incomprehensible. Be patient; we want your reading to be disrupted, your attention to be redirected and diverted. Easily achieved, clear reading might not always be the best reading. Perhaps, if you haven’t already, you will gain some appetite for the imperfect, yet impassioned.



Donna J. Haraway

A MANIFESTO FOR CY

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOG

SOCIALIS

THE 1980S

... CHAPTER IS AN EFFORT TO ... Perna ... than as reverent ... to require taking things very seriously. I know no better ... the secular-religious, evangelical traditions of U.S. politics, ... of socialist feminism. Blasphemy protects one from the Moral Ma

still insisting on the need for community ... Blasphemy is not apostasy ... contradictions that do not resolve into wholeness, even dialectically, about

irony is about humor and serious play. It is also a rhetorical strategy and political method, one I would like to see honored within socialist feminism. At the center of my blasphemous, hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction. Social reality is lived social relations, our most important political construction. This experience is a fiction, and national women's movements have constructed "women's experience", as well as uncovered or discovered this crucial collective object. This experience is a fiction, and fact of the most crucial, political kind. Liberation rests on the construction of the consciousness, the imaginative apprehension, of oppression, and so of possibility. The cyborg is a matter of fiction and lived experience that changes what counts as women's experience in the late twentieth century. This is a struggle over life and death, but the boundary between science fiction and social reality is an optical illusion.

By the late twentieth century, our time, a mythic time, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism are a central fact of our ontology; it gives

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By the late twentieth century, our time, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism are a central fact of our ontology; it gives

c) analysis possible. By the... between human and animal, is

thoroughly breached. The last beachheads of uniqueness have been polluted, if not turned into amusement parks - language, tool use, social behavior, mental events. Nothing really convincingly settles the separation of human and animal. Many people no longer feel the need of such a separation; indeed, many branches of feminist culture affirm the pleasure of connection with human and other living creatures. Movements for animal rights are not irrational denials of human uniqueness; they are clear-sighted recognition of connection.

... Biology and evolutionary theory over the last two centuries have simulated the distinction between humans and animals to a faint trace... life and social sciences. Within this... humans and animals... should be fought as a... scientific

critical people to contest for the meanings of the boundary between human and animal is transgressed. Far from signaling a walling off of people from other living things, bestiality has a new status

in the machine. This dualism structure... idealism that was settled... distinction is between animal-human (organism) and machine. Bestiality has a new status

... only mock it. They were not man, an author... reproductive dream. To think they... Late twentieth century... between natural and machines are

The second machine... settled by a dualism... machines were... Now we are not so... eternally designed... Our

... we engage... in post... engage

Scientific management in the 19th century

Women in the integrated circuit

Ecosystem

Nature/culture

Cyborg citizenship

Communications enhancement

Lacan

White capitalist patriarchy

Intersectional feminism

Informalities of domination

This list suggests several interesting things. First, the left-hand side cannot go back ideologically or materially. It's not just

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This list suggests several interesting things. First, the left-hand side cannot go back ideologically or materially. It's not just the world's charged with microelectronic and biotechnology. In relation to objects like biotech subjects like D. costs of lowering con- reproduction can no longer reasonably call on notions of sex and sex role as organic unmasked as irrational, and ironically corporate executives reading Playboy and an irrationalism. Such reasoning will be formulated in terms of frequencies of parameters. It is "irrational" to be like primitive ways to a new practice called "experimental ethnography" attention to the play of languages of any

Nearly three decades on from first publication, Donna Haraway's path breaking *Cyborg Manifesto* remains a deeply moving, uniquely evocative text; charged perhaps moreso than ever before with political, aesthetic and ethical possibilities for a world—this world—in crisis. Indeed, as our so-called smart devices codify a new informational metatopography of daily life, and as those devices increasingly shift from hand-held into more wearable forms, we seem to be bearing witness to the return of Haraway's anti/alter/post-protagonist, that ambivalent technobody that departs from no original unity and shirks all telos; one that "is not made of mud," and "cannot dream of returning to dust."

For those of us invested in excavating the embodied and affective valences of this moment of speculative circulation and emergent technical and biopolitical formations (though I would follow Butler [2013] in suggesting that this "biopolitical moment" is neither singular nor evenly distributed), this return is of particular interest. A resurgent cyborg assemblage holds forth the promise of turning us toward a conception of the body as negotiable and assembled, rather than simply given; a not-strictly-human body that gathers together and concretizes the novelties, the detritus and the variable speeds of a world in which the liberatory promise of the digital is both unevenly distributed and erratically circulated. In this sense, a revitalized cyborg assemblage would probe the question of where and in

what form(s) the human appears or does not appear within prevailing geopolitical and affective regimes; a question that, as Butler (2004) notes, constitutes a central problem for the humanities today.

This potentially emergent technical assemblage would name the loose centre of what Munster (2013) has recently called the "aesthesia" of life inside the network; the affective condition of being ensnared in and impinged upon by relations that necessarily wade through domains that are not necessarily human. It is where the speed(s) of information and the speed(s) of bodies fall into an asynchronous relation with one another, subject to any number of gaps and lags; the sort of negative spaces that open the body-technology relation to a range of critical interventions.

Yet when we attend to the ways in which digital devices and environments circulate within contemporary discursive formations, what we find is not an elaboration of these possibilities, but rather their unfortunate attenuation. Publications both popular and academic seem unwilling to approach developments such as the (by no means unproblematic) proliferation of wearable technologies on terms that exceed technocratic considerations of efficacy: "how do social media impact social movements?" "How will wearable technology change law enforcement?" Indeed, it seems to me that the

ambivalent terrains forced open at the site of the cyborg as Haraway theorized it, and the potentialities implicated in its intensification or revivification, are increasingly under threat of foreclosure from a number of directions, only one of which I have sufficient leave to address here.

The vector to which I turn is that of speculative capital and the aesthetic forms it instantiates, fixated as they are upon a smoothing out of precisely those errant, deviant temporalities that emerge within a cyborg assemblage. In their 2009 study of pre- and post-2008 financial industry advertisements, De Cock et. al uncover just such an image universe. The images in their sample almost universally envision a world of friction-free connectivity and circulation (Brophy 2006), wherein all distance is collapsed into flows of (commodified) data that operate irrespective of geophysical constraints. Fictive megacities, stitched together seamlessly out of the glass-and-steel spires that populate the world's financial centres and presumably synchronized to some universal time (a time already under development in the board rooms and labs of today's global corporations; see the Swatch-MIT "dot.beats" experiment), tumble upward elegantly, brushing against the lowest reaches of the atmosphere.

These spectral landscapes mimic the ways in which the network broadly construed circulates as an aesthetic object today. As Munster (2013) contends, networks of all sorts (financial, military, activist, terrorist) increasingly appear to us in a pseudo-sublime register, wherein one may be seamlessly mapped onto the next, regardless of the qualitative or temporal disjunctions between them.

"Dominated by links and nodes, visualized as direct lines connecting dots" (Munster 2013, 2) networks today assume a visual form very much at home in the image universe of speculative capital. Like so many abstract financial instruments, they appear "infinitely transposable" (Munster 2013, 2), one fusing seamlessly to the next, leaving no trace of whatever violences or resistances this fusion may have provoked. In aesthetic terms, we might say that the contemporary capitalist imaginary is infected with a "pervasive mimesis barely concealing a visual and conceptual slide into...network anesthesia" (Munster 2013, 3, emphasis in original).

This anesthetic (anaesthetic?) quality, however, is by no means confined to representative visual texts such as advertising images. Rather, it both underwrites and overdetermines the various devices we now encounter in the course of our daily lives. In a number of recent press interviews (see Sigal 2013; Bosker 2013), for instance, representatives of Internet megalith Google have declared that Glass, the company's recently unveiled, headset-style smart device, represents a major step toward their ultimate ambition of producing "invisible" technologies. While such an aspiration seems to be at odds with an industry wedded to the multi-billion dollar business of advertising, marketing and image-making, Google nonetheless seems eager to locate and occupy a space beyond perception; indeed, beyond the very possibility of perception.

This tendency, of course, is already latent within other Google products. The fine-grained personalization capabilities built into the latest iteration of Google Maps, for example, have rightly raised important questions around what is and is not apprehensible in situations where

the boundary that delineates the two domains is relentlessly contoured to match the supple flow of capital (Badger 2013). Integrated with a device like Glass (and integration seems inevitable), these capabilities would enable Google to quite literally—and quite selectively—territorialize visual space; to set limits on what forms, what bodies, and what relations are permissible within a marketized lifeworld. And though these claims make repeated recourse to spatial metaphors, it seems to me that such a movement toward invisibility also opens onto the temporal register. Glass emerges as a device that would neatly align, in the interest of shoring up profit, the peaks and troughs of biological time with its own machinic velocities, anaesthetizing the relation between the two and attenuating those moments arrhythmia that might make the body-technology relation sensible, and by extension, open to intervention.

It is also worth noting that the sort of fully integrated technobody imagined by devices like Glass appears before us as a paradigmatically male one. I recall here the words of Google co-founder Sergey Brin, who during a speech at California's annual TED conference in February 2013 made the rather curious (but telling) claim that handheld smart devices are "kind of emasculating." In his words: "Is this the way you're meant to interact with other people? Is the future of connection just people walking around hunched up, looking down, rubbing a featureless piece of glass... *Is this what you're meant to do with your body?*" (my emphasis). For Brin, it would seem that to so much as acknowledge the disjuncture between body and device—to avert one's commanding, full-forward gaze (we are in Laura Mulvey's company here) so as to apprehend a smart phone external to the body—is to risk lapsing into a kind of slumping, disfigured, even grotesque form that he powerfully identifies with femininity. His comments, in this sense, reanimate those

discursive and representational regimes that have historically configured women's bodies as out-of-order, chaotic and volatile. The feminine, in Brin's imaginary, emerges as a site of intense anxiety that threatens to dissolve the biopolitical and economic interoperabilities that thread patriarchy and capital together. In light of such claims it becomes all the more urgent that we attend to devices such as Glass on feminist and queer terms so that we might excavate the ways in which particular technological assemblages shore up the resources of a capitalism shot through with the violences of misogyny, patriarchy, gender essentialism and heterosexism.

And so while I began this essay with the rather sanctimonious claim that we seem to be in the midst of a return to the cyborg, the preceding considerations make it clear that under present conditions such a return is simply not enough. If we are to elude the anaesthetizing force that contemporary capital exerts upon the ambivalent relations—temporal, spatial, visual, aesthetic, gendered—between body and technology that define the cyborg assemblage, while rescuing the critical possibilities towards which those relations gesture, we require more than a circling-back-upon pre-given forms. We require a defense by way of (re)in(ter)vention. We must press the affective and aesthetic conditions of this assemblage further, toward new and emerging terrains of contestation; we must multiply, intensify, and illuminate the relations that cross and recross its boundaries.

We must ferment aesthetic practices that animate "new political sensoria, and new sensoria of the political" (Taylor 2013, para. 8); practices that trade not simply in forms already perceptible (the strictly human body, the link-and-node network) but in the domain of

perception and perceptibility (Munster 2013), where reality itself is plied as a medium rather than accepted as neutral substrate (cárdenas 2012). This will require that we commit to thematizing the gaps, lags and crashes immanent to digitality (Munster 2013), and be willing to depart from rather than disavow such asynchronicities.

Where much new left theorizing (Dean 2012; Dean 2013; Williams & Srnicek 2013) would and does resign such sense-making to the post- or non-political, for Munster (2006), it is of the utmost importance. In bringing forth “sets of lived circumstances in which our senses are encroached upon, engaged and felt differently,” it is what grounds and makes operative “a socio-ethical-technical assemblage of relations” (166) that might fundamentally intervene in any number of contemporary political struggles; struggles over the conditions of transnationality, over gendered and sexualized injustices, over practices of neoimperialism and neocolonialism, over climate refugeeism and other forms of coercive/coerced migration.

For a sense of what form(s) this intensified assemblage might assume, we can look to the work of media artist Ricardo Dominguez, whose projects take up Munster’s call for an ethically engaged technical-aesthetic practice while pushing it firmly in the direction of political struggle by eschewing her taste for the gallery. Instead, Dominguez trains his attention on ostensibly low-tech (though he would surely

prefer the term “Mayan” tech [Dominguez 1999]), disjunctive and geopolitically ambivalent spaces of display that take shape within and across transnational and migratory zones. It is here that Dominguez deploys what I have elsewhere called in rather remote terms, a “radical poetics of collective action and futurity” (Morgenstern 2012, para. 4). This poetics, however, is only made operative through the refuse of contemporary capitalism, through those objects that have fallen out of sync with the accelerationist regime of speculative invisible capital.

Dominguez’ 2007 work, *Transborder Immigrant Tool*, is paradigmatic of this practice. For the project, Dominguez transformed low-cost, aftermarket cellular phones into devices that point Mexican immigrants toward clean water sites and safe houses along the treacherous migration routes that cross the Mexico-US border. In this sense, the Tool makes an accessible and overtly political intervention into the material conditions of transnational survivability. Yet at the same time, it operates within what micha cárdenas (2012) calls a political aesthetics of “crossing,” insofar as it seeks to make legible, through a provisional and asynchronous meeting of body and technology, those bodies-in-transit that do not cohere with such state- or market-located frames of apprehensibility as the citizen or the consumer. More fundamentally, it intervenes in the conceptual, spatial and temporal parameters that would constrain in advance where a human body can and cannot exist.

Similarly, we might look toward cárdenas’ own work. By thematizing, through an experimental aesthetic approach to wearable

technologies, the sorts of lags and crashes so prominent in Munster's account of digitality and situating them within their own experiences as a transgender/genderqueer member of the Colombian diaspora (implicitly indexing J Halberstam's work on "the queer art of failure" [2011]), cárdenas makes visceral that which is externalized by "seamless" technical assemblages such as Google Glass: the experience of transness; the condition of being dislocated and undone, of vibrating between any number of frequencies at once, of being suspended in the ethically charged domain between here and there (Butler 2012). cárdenas' work issues to their world a defiant declaration, one that is instructive to all those who would seek to intervene in this moment of foreclosure, who would intensify rather than ossify the conditions of cyborg affectivity, who would multiply and electrify the ties that hold us together in coalitions against violence and injustice: "to all the people who have tried to make me choose between man and woman...I choose to be a shape-shifter, a dragon, and a lightwave."

When Dominguez calls for "a geo-aesthetics that can construct ethical and performative complexities for the new earths to come, that can touch new geographies for new bodies—transbodies with transborder rights" (as quoted in Bird 2011, para. 22) then, it seems that he is in some measure calling for the sort of intensified cyborg assemblage for which I have argued here. And it is my sense that, if we are to intervene in and finally oppose the more wretched valences of our present conditions, bonded to one another not by the mute, seamless synchronicity of capital but by shared political struggles and robust ethical commitments, it is a call that we would do well to heed.

Tyler Morgenstern

is a Montréal (Iroquois territory) based writer, student and activist. His work, which has appeared in *The Tye*, *ArtThreat* and *Sad Mag* (among others), focuses on queer and feminist accounts of art and literature, technology, digitality, network aesthetics and ethics. He is currently pursuing an MA in Media Studies at Concordia University. His published work can be found at tylermorgenstern.tumblr.com, his new work can be found at mandescendingv2.wordpress.com, and he can be reached on Twitter at [@tyler_writes](https://twitter.com/tyler_writes).



4d d d d d dream

Four D cinema appears in a moment of violent desperation for late capitalist film distribution techniques. Determined to somehow reproduce the blockbuster, studios and theaters have been grinding against the historical price inelasticity of movie tickets by expanding into tiered pricing. First came the three D film, a slight technical improvement that grants an upper class experience without compromising access to the necessary mass of mass media. As the novelty fades, the three D market has undergone violent quakes, both in aesthetics and investment return. Yet, so goes the capitalist expansionary desire that, lacking any need or purpose, the historical move is being repeated. Not a revolution in film or a new model, but a new D.

These four D films are, first of all, in three Ds, but the fourth D introduces a range of new aspects. There are chairs, the chairs move and swing. There are smells: the afterburners that shoot at your eyes in the third D can shit sweet gasoline smell in your nose in the fourth, while the Shire's doddering pastoral smells like Febeeze. There is smoke. (Note that these cinemas, which started in their current incarnation in South Korea, remain largely outside of America where people do not shoot up movie theaters or suffer permanent mass hysteria.) There are flash bulbs, a minor part of the D that is mainly to make lightning seem very lightning. There is water spray in your face, for rain, for sloshing of ocean, presumably also for water guns and water cannons and spit. And finally there are thwacks: little hammers and bands at the lower back and calves, and bursts of compressed air to the face and back of the head, either in the hair or behind the ear. These are for when somebody gets hit.

Like most gratuitous capitalist innovation, the fourth D

is a serious risk. It requires significant investment in air bursting and smell machines. As an escalation of tiered pricing it has high barriers for consumption, with tickets another half-ticket price more than the third D. More significant, however, is the risk to the medium itself. As capitalist markets require growth even at maximum capacity, decreasing profit in an efficient industry signals a coming mass failure, mass closure and a run on the industrial capacity when corporations divest in favor of other markets with greater returns. This is the basic formula of capitalist nihilism; growth in a market at less than the rate otherwise available to an investor in other markets allows the logic of the first market to consider every possibility, even autophagy, even the active destruction of the base that produces the existing profits. How would this apply to a film technology? What could be less cannibalistic, less nihilistic than a new d of experience? What makes the fourth d dangerous is not the smells or lights or smoke themselves, but an application that radicalizes film out of its century-old bourgeois technologies.

When a film structures an experience it relies, simplistically, on tropes embedded in a visual syntax. Dominating both in bourgeois cinema is invisibility; the character of identification needs to be the pure void of basic experience: some, most or all of which is white, straight, male, youngish, physically and mentally unimpaired. The visual syntax needs to be equally unobtrusive, or obtrusive only in expected stylistic ways that launch dads into discussions of "cinematography" afterwards. Radical critique of cinema has, after Brecht, insisted on this dimension (or "D") as the central one for bourgeois cultural production. When Godard repeats Manet and makes the materiality and structure of film the objects

of film production, it is a disruption of this invisible grip. We, newly dew-eyed, become aware of film as an active ideological reproduction of the capitalist class who finance it and as a haven for the desires of the particular sort of men who make it. So informed, we can question everything we've been taught from cowboy cinema about how to kill and stab people and holler at women. Yet, since Godard, there has been a slow renunciation of technological innovation as the avenue of radical cinema. Here I stop being coy and demand that the fourth D can be such an innovation.

After seeing the earlier description of the fourth D, perceptive readers might wonder how these effects are actually arranged in a film. Do I get blasted every time a blast goes? Do I get sprayed in all water environments? Do zombie movies smell like flesh or like blood or like brains or like skulls? There are, unfortunately for theoretical symmetry, six Ds of four D interaction:

1. Environmental

Smells emanating from establishing shots, water from the sea spray, etc. These attempt to replicate the environment of the camera's imaginary position.

2. Camera Centered

As the camera pulls back over a vista, the chair pulls; as it barrels through a cavern, the chair barrels.

3. Three D Interacted

Just as three D cinema does a lot of pointing things in the camera lens and straight-on shots of incoming goop, the fourth D uses these moments to send you a good whiff of air or water blast.

4. Character Centered

The target character on screen is bashed in his robot suit; I get bashed as well, oof, my visceral empathy.

5. Action Oriented

An arrow flies, the camera mindlessly follows the arrow, the bursts whizz past your ears. A thundering mecha wrestles a knife-headed kaiju and the chairs toss and tumble with each Greco-Roman thrust.

6. Anticipatory and Absent

By intensifying certain moments in the previous five ways, the techniques threaten constantly to overwhelm or confuse the viewer, so their use must be limited. Blasts and chair shakes and stink bombs occur in some instances, but not all. Instead of making the film more coherent, this limit emphasizes its own absence. I wait to get smashed and nothing comes— my identifications are thrown into an abyss.

