EXCESSIVE RESEARCH relates to the announcement of transmediale 2016, ‘Conversation Piece’ which highlights the compulsive actions of digital culture, and how we are constantly encouraged to stay active, to make, to share and to secure. In this newspaper the authors delve into the nature of these actions and their limits.

EXCESSIVE RESEARCH is driven by the then very topical phenomenon of file sharing, but there seemed to be other implications that are based on scarcity. He describes, for instance, how the sun freely expands energy without receiving anything in return. If people intend to be free (from the imperatives of capitalism, for instance) they recommend they should pursue a general economy of expenditure (giving, sacrifice or destruction). Only then will they escape the determination of existing imperatives of utility and normative production. For Bataille, people are necessarily beings of excess; full of exorbitant energy, fantasies, need, drives, and heterogeneous desires. The notion of ‘excess’ energy is central to Bataille’s thinking. He takes the superabundance of energy, beginning from the infinite outpouring of solar energy or the surpluses produced by life’s basic chemical reactions, as the norm for organisms. In other words, an organism in Bataille’s general economy, normally has an excess of energy available to it. This extra energy can be used productively for the organism’s growth or it can be lavishly expended. Bataille insists that an organism’s growth or expansion always runs up against limits and becomes impossible. The wasting of this energy is a ‘luxury’ characteristic of any society. ‘The accursed share’ refers to this excess, destined for waste.

Given how institutionalised research itself is bound to artificial scarcity and its own brand of compulsory actions (the requirement to produce articles, to network, to cite, to secure patents and (continues p.15)
When data circulates, it opens up new possibilities. Oversharing is a concept of excess. The excessive circulation of cultural content, such as memes, reveals an anxiety to share. Through humour and irony, (over) sharing of cultural content points to inherent values in society, one such example is how racism and sexism is expressed ironically in memes. Irony makes it possible to address difficult issues and even taboos, but might also fail to cope with their seriousness.

Periodshare (a research-through-design project made in Spring 2015) speculates on the future value of body fluids as an iconic and critical investigation of today’s self-tracking culture where everything can be quantified and exchanged. Periodshare is a speculative design product featuring a wearable, wireless menstruation cup connected to an app. The system automatically tracks the period and shares it over social networks, hereby making it easy for the subject to inform her partner, boss, and friends about her period. She can even live-tweet her menstruation cycle, hereby making something very private a public issue. Periodshare explores the boundaries of inside/outside, private/public, and material/representation data. More importantly, Periodshare questions the status quo of menstruation: what is the value of menstruation in a post-digital age? A number of members of the tech industry invite menstruation into new operating systems. This sense of menstruation as a hot topic but on very different terms: artists aim to break the taboo and the tech industry aims to monetize it. Periodshare is situated as an ironic response towards the consumer culture, and the project included a Kickstarter campaign as well as a presentation at an Internet fair as a performative intervention, where I performed as a start-up looking for funding.

Excess as Sharing

In The Accursed Share, Georges Bataille presented a utopian society where human activity should not only be judged according to its use-value. Rather, uselessness should be considered an important, sovereign form of human life, in erotic as well as economic systems. Bataille’s notion of excess confronts the traditional idea of exchange as the only valid system, by highlighting the fact that in every system, there is expenditure, waste, which cannot be accounted for on unproductive activities. These, Bataille argues, are the greatest enemy of capitalism. Wolfgang Sützl points to Bataille’s notion of excess as an inspiration for the consumption society, and the project included a Kickstarter campaign as well as a presentation at an Internet fair as a performative intervention, where I performed as a start-up looking for funding.

X Sharing the Abject in Digital Culture – Marie Louise Juul Søndergaard

Comments:

NN: What role does this work play in relation to gender? Perhaps there is a link here to the performance of gender?

NN: Why is menstruation data more intimate than other data? It is possibly that this is the last thing we haven’t shared (or quantified)?

NN: Menstruation as data (in Periodshare) can be commodified or integrated to capital flow and, at the same time, menstruation as matter remains ‘dirty’. What I mean is that exactly the step of representing matter into data allows to take advantage of the data as a product and use it (in its numerical form, at least) as a quite aseptic layer to keep menstruation materiality buried.

NN: It is easier to talk about e.g. a percentage of garbage or death tolls, while avoiding banana peels and bodies.

NN: Methodologies that gather data from fluctuating and dissimilar devices, allow governments to generate an ‘individuality’ of a datafied citizen, a quite different kind of subjectivity.

NN: In turning menstruation into a commodity, is it not also a way to make it powered, a banality? How can empowerment be addressed in the context of consumption?

In a very literal sense, menstruation is an excess of the bodily system. It is associated with non-reproductive sex, but also with death, as menstruation has the impossible status of a dead being who never lived. To particular, menstruation as data, as Julia Kristeva terms ‘abject’, something that is neither me nor recognizable as a thing (2). The abjection of menstruation, Kristeva argues, points to the subject itself as the abjection of menstruation comes from her own body, and consequently leads to the abjection of self. Whereas Kristeva builds her psychoanalytical notions of the abject, Mary Douglas’s analysis is grounded in social anthropology and in a structuralist understanding of dirt. The menstrual experience of menstruation as dirt is a matter of order (Douglas 44). If the European culture understands menstruation as dirt, it is not (only) as a symbol of bad hygiene, but rather, and more importantly, as a symbol of an inappropriate element in a systematic ordering and classification of matter. As such, the menstrual woman does not fit in a European conception of the female, as she neither equals sex, nor reproduction.

Ambiguous Data

This distinction between dirt and purity is of high relevance when we consider menstruation and data. Like menstruation, data is in a transitional state between being an extension of my body and a commodity, between being representational, incorporeal. In this sense, data can also be seen as abjection, but we have come to understand data as pure. Contrary to menstruation, data is neither shame or disgust in data. Also there seems to be no ambiguity in data. Even if both can be contested. However, when it comes to menstruation data, it is clearly not true. Menstruation data is too taboed to be shared, and thus points to ambiguity in data. The information in menstruation data is a matter of order; it is dirt on social media, still haunted by the symbolic value of menstruation itself – as excessive information. So menstruation might be commodified and made exchangeable, but it does not overcome its excessive character. Menstruation is informative, and so is the data. When shared, menstruation data becomes very explicit and the act of sharing it becomes an act of oversharing. As “too much information”, this excess of information is inappropriate and a non-productive act. Banality and use-value. But maybe not exactly by making the exchangeable menstruation data redundant through sharing.

Works cited:


Media activism was not just brushing media against the grain, but also intervening in the socio-economic structure of the media and tech industries. This involved questioning the notion of scarcity. To examine such questions, we organized a conference, Cultures and Ethics of Sharing, in Innsbruck, and later I co-organized an ICA preconference on digital sharing with Nicholas John (Hebrew University). Since then my research has been mainly concerned with the conceptual dimension of sharing.

 Cornelius: Before we talk about the phenomenon of sharing in the context of digital networks – obviously this is the field in which it has been rediscovered and has proliferated most in the twenty
cations as well.
It that it becomes an act of resistance against quantification, could technology provide us with the tools of resistance, while resisting the exchange economy and hiding our datafied self, but instead creating an excessive amount of information only to exploit?

**Exchangeable Menstruation**

A product of neoliberal rationalism, self-tracking is part of the exchange economy that has led the principle of exchange to establish itself in our bodies and minds (Sützl), and as such, the quantification of menstruation takes self-tracking to the extreme. With Periodshare, menstruation is no longer bodily excess or waste, but instead the project asks what happens with the symbolic value of menstruation in this extreme shift from excess to exchange. As a conversation piece, Periodshare invites us to ask questions instead of solving a pragmatic or theoretical problem. Understood through the notion of excess, it questions and reflects upon the symbolic value of menstruation in an exchange economy, and more profoundly the concerns of taboo, subjectivity, and oversharing. *Is technology opening up new ways of oversharing?*

**The Testimony of Structure: Codes and Contemporary Poetry – Nathan Jones**

*Comments:*

**NN:** Flickering – a moment that flickers, Hayles talks about how the world is restructured in terms of pattern and noise, and the ‘flickering sigil’ emerges between the two. Computer logic is re-expressed mangled, an unlikely cyborg, an imperfect mix.

**NN:** Reminiscent of generative works, relationship between method, disorganising principle, and outcome – if only seeing the poems without knowing the underlying prin-ciples or machine logic, how do they relate?

**NN:** Later glitch art often failed to address the structural component of technologies, the vernacular of file formats – on a structural or material level it was more about glitches. When, on metaphorical level of rhetoric level, is it still a glitch? Information is still transmitted, but is not broken down in material way.

**NN:** Symbolic poetry, rupturing between syntax and semiotics, and what is happening in the financialisation in society, generates excess that has been datafied and commodified. Glitch and excess, in the comments on the blog, an excess of semiotics is forcing the syntax and revealing itself, and vice versa, and potentially creating a new space for poetics and politics.

29). That is, language moves from affirming presence and absence in relation to the bodily and physical, to existing as a flickering play of pattern and randomness, having to do with the numerical aspects of probability – the statistical array. Berardi seems to suggest this transformation from the structure of presence/absence to that of pattern/randomness was performed firstly in symbolist poetry. He connects the symbolist project’s separation of signifier from significant explicitly to the way that markets moved from physical to semiotic labour:

“symbolist poets enhanced the connotational potency of language to the point of explosion and hyperinclusion. […] This magic of post-referential language anticipated the general process of differentiation that occurred when the economy became a semi-economy.” (Berardi 18)

Contemporary Testimony

Conversely, what Berardi calls for in poetry – implying perhaps a new kind of poetry – is an enunciation of the sensuous, which he designates variously as “the voice” or “excess” of language. What concerns us is the enunciation – as “pure event of language” – and specific form of enunciation in testimony, as the moment in which the subject is located in the split between the sayable and unsayable (Agamben, Remnants 139). We are interested in a contemporary poetry which articulates the speaking subject as a combination of the human-beings and the technological which together form the posthuman subject.

Agamben describes the contemporary as someone who is able to see, and reveal, formally written aspects of their time: “To perceive, in the darkness of the present, this light that strives to reach us but cannot” (Agamben, “The Contemporary” 50). Withdrawal is essential to Heideggerian ontology, and Agamben has previously used the term to affirm a distinction between the human open-ness and animal self-withdrawal of which he says the human-as-animal is composed (Agamben, The Open 71-75). We can now posit a similar move in considering the boundary of human openness and technological self-withdrawal which makes up the posthuman writing subject. The excess of language is defined by the codification and sensuous meaning, whose relation normally withdraws itself in allowing for the enunciation to take place.

Codex and Glitch

The model for contemporary enunciation in the context of the infosphere, I argue, is that of codices. The codex (coding-decoding) is a process which allows for the most salient features of new media – namely that singularly sensuous presence/absent meanings can be categorised in the generic form of the statistical array. In the codex process, the storage format of data and the structuring interface used to make that data immanent, withdraw themselves in their revealing. Glitch artists such as Rosa Menkman and Nick Briz have forcefully made their work, disclose itself, by editing the source code of the data or interface in order to produce situations wherein they fail to articulate or decipher their meaning. The resulting media then literally exceed their data, being added to by patterns, colourings, warps from the interface; while also becoming diminished, half-withdrawing from view in favour of the ‘darkness’ of structure.

Works cited:


...
the limits of dominant, defuturing modes of crises in bee ecologies and economic systems. Part of an ongoing project to investigate real and excess of academic structures. Part of the phe-

- from translation services and singing exchange honey for non-monetary things for Kunst und Urbanistik, unfolding as an tion of what might lie beyond them. the

of an anti-economy that also underlies the demand to offer the second cheek. the positive connotation of sharing, its “niceness,” comes perhaps from the idea of equality and togetherness in

What seems key to me here is not so much that by sharing a large crowd is fed from a few loaves of bread and some fish, with everyone getting enough. the point is that there are several baskets lously small amount of food. this happens after Jesus tells his disciples not to send people to the surrounding villages to buy food, and he stops them from engaging in economic exchange.

Wolfgang: the New testament contains many references to sharing, the most widely known is perhaps the Feeding of the 5000, where Jesus and his followers share what seems to be a ridicu-

Cornelia: What also comes to mind when thinking about sharing is its embeddedness in christian culture. how much is the positive connotation of sharing due to this religious origin?

NN: And what is the economy of the bees? What analogies does the bee/honey ecology/economy have to media theory more generally (with reference to Jussi Parrikka’s Insect Media?)

NN: What analogies of sharing in earth pizzas, the commodity. You seem to let the Bourdieu to speak on their behalf.

i am reminded of the critique of Bourdieu by Ranciere. A critique of speaking for the worker and assuming that the worker cannot speak for themselves and needs Bourdieu to speak on their behalf. What would the bee say if we let it speak? It would say that it is a commodity. You seem to let the bee speak for us, rather than ourselves (speaking for ourselves),- there is the idea from the non-human speaks for the human.

Jean and Mary Kosut note that “only when bees vanish do they tangibly appear to us” (517). the phe-

The Bee Speak: “in a cluster which appears to have been produced ostensibly the perfect post-human enun-


Superabundance logics in Bitcoin mining – Pablo Velasco

Comments:

NN: The various operational logics work well here (like blockchains as paradigm) to draw out some useful correlations between cryptocurrencies and how accepted notions of abundance and value can be conceptualized. How does this change our understanding of bitcoin? Is there anything new revealed here in terms of the various energies that are wasted and perhaps more importantly how we understand financialisation after the removal of the gold standard when money became virtual?

NN: You haven’t said much about who owns these mines, how they are connected to other forms and flows of capital and power might be worth addressing. Also I’m interested in the proliferation of other cryptocurrencies – how variable are they, how bitcoin fits into that landscape, and compares with something like Faircoin, might also be relevant. And what the relationship is between these kinds of currencies and the already dominant digital (cashless) economy.

NN: A fascinating reversal of ‘excess here’ in the other articles, mine included, has been the tendency to think about excess as a way of undercutting capitalistic (appropriative tendencies). The article lays out very clearly the rapid ascent into excess as a mode of generating finance through bitcoin. I wondered if you would be interested in using this knowledge of the structure involved in bitcoin to propose a different model which would find a social way of distributing scarce non-duplicate tokens using blockchain technology? Are there other flavours available?

NN: Thinking of a homeostatic system as a system consuming huge amount of energy to become stable (a bitcoin) might be an interesting concept to develop.

Works cited:


operation is to have a machine capable of generating as many as 100,000 of these units per second as possible.

The logical layer of mining immediately transforms itself in a material overflow of energy and waste. From the deployment of the device until June 2010, mining was a task that any modern CPU could handle, even though the process would push it to its limits and heavily reduce its lifetime; until mid-2010 the workload moved to GPUs, but was rapidly surpassed by FPGAs (Field Programmable Gate Arrays), which reduced energy consumption but increased the amount of hash power per second (Taylor). At least since 2013, mining requires the use of ASICs (Application Specific Integrated Circuits) machines. Pools of miners (or farms, if they share the same physical space), contribute their processing power to calculate a block. Last year a paper estimated that the mining network consumed about the same electricity as Ireland (Malone and O’Dwyer), and its numbers have doubled in the last year. The energy consumed by farms is also noteworthy; a single one can use 1.5 thousand times more than an average USA household.

Mining, at this point of the evolution of the device, is a race, and reducing energy footprint is not grounded in pollution awareness, but in cost cutting. And while mining units become progressively more energy efficient, they simultaneously become more obsolescent. A constant refill of state-of-the-art equipment is necessary to stay in the race. But unlike traditional gas or oil, mining units are generated out of a short life because of their hardware resistance, cheap materials or fashionable ideologies of consumption (Guanini), “planned obsolescence” that becomes evident in the scarcity model of Bitcoin’s design. After their useful period, they become completely worthless, they go directly from life to waste. Since there is no second hand market for mining equipment, probably they simply add up to High Tech trash problems (Puckett and Smith). Units by themselves are not more threatening than a colossal mound of coal; used servers and cycles of the hardware are intrinsic to the system.

The substantial empty computational work, energy usage, and e-waste produced in the chained mining operation has no other goal, and so far no other purpose, than to keep the machines running to process the, possibly infinite, digital scarcity. The idea of waste is superceded by efficiency, and annulled in a scenario where the system is fully operative. This computational approach leaves the surplus of the system is not considered wasted, but a designed element of control. Jennifer Gabrys has argued that non-rational waste is what cannot be reintegrated to the production system, it is a remainder, a surplus that escapes capitalism’s loop controls, and thus, modifies ecologies and regimes of control to and from which surplus is not considered wasted, but a designed element of control (Tiziana Terranova, elaborating on Marx’s idea that machinery develops productive powers that are not completely contained by the capitalist economy, also warns that abstract administrative apparatuses of control to and from surplus are generated (Terranova). Cryptocurrencies are a good example of how the idea of unlimited resources gets embedded into automated and instrumented apparatuses.

X Sensing and making sense in absence: An exercise on translation of materialities – Grazielle Lautenschlager

Comments:

NN: What are the reasons to choose the word ‘translation’?

NN: On the political implications of the manipulation of the materialities and technology (references of racism on photographic film development and in face recognition software and the work of Zach Blas).

NN: I was also intrigued by your reference to Kittler and how understandings of RGB can be translated to a new understanding of the eye. I am reminded of Wendy Chun’s book Programmed Visions (perhaps also relevant in other ways to you) and her explanation of the relation between analogue and digital. As I recall it, she claims that the digital builds on an analogy to processes of memory as structured around binary opposites. Subsequently, this analogy becomes an explanation of nature: the analogy becomes an ontology. This is a slightly different view on ‘translation’ that perhaps is useful. I am not sure I do Chun’s explanation justice here, but you can perhaps read more yourself.

NN: What is produced in this translation process? Also in genetic engineering and generative processes, what is added here? Is it lost? Yet as much as there was a lot of attention to translation in the discussion of this paper, I wondered about the use of the term materiality: what kind of materiality are you talking about and from what disciplinary perspective? I liked your terms of sensing images and uncertainty, and the ‘black box’ of vision. The visual anthropologist I mentioned is Andrew Irving at Manchester. I think his research on accessing ‘inner voice’ in the public arena connects well with your ideas for sharing subjective viewing experiences. that work to a greater extent as control system. At least to some degree this is underpinned by the idea that digital resources – production of hashes at high difficulty – unlike its more evidently material counterpart in electric waste, can be excessive. Immortality has become post-digital: an idea of digital superabundance has become naturalised in our technology, and in our relations to it, to the point that questions of excessive computing power are redirected to the realm of performance. If a system works, the excessiveness becomes conspicuous.

There is a rationale of unlimited resources attached to the idea of the digital, in part because it is still understood as an immaterial virtuality. What is more, rather than becoming obviously material due to its more known relations to humans, waste, or servers, digital immateriality hasn’t disappeared.

The neglect of digital materiality is also expressed in Media Art, essentially founded in some dichotomies: organic and machine, virtual and actual, analogue and digital, among others. When renowned authors of the field, like Edmond Couchot, state that the mining process ‘is not a longer physical (material or energy related)’ (Couchot 182–3), all the existent materialities that the human senses cannot perceive are ignored. The associations of Media Art to immateriality might have many reasons. Its place in the History of Art as a peripheral and post-process-based artwork, rather than art objects is one of them. However, I consider that the main root is the historically and culturally constructed separation between the world of thinkers and the world of makers. Certainly we can find few examples of artists and groups that are successful in shortening the gap between conceptualisation and production by means of imagining the cross-disciplinarity of Media Art.

Nevertheless, in order to put in check some aspects that usually reinforce the problem, and to further the discussions and production in the field, it is necessary to address this problem. Regarding Simondon’s conceptualisation perfecting the building as a generation of tools for the manipulation of the materialities, the digital seems to be the new tool of the 21st century. It acts as a kind of reminiscence of the cross-disciplinarity of the Media Art. Nevertheless, it is important to address the problem. Regarding Simondon’s conceptualisation perfecting the building as a generation of tools for the manipulation of the materialities, the digital seems to be the new tool of the 21st century. It acts as a kind of reminiscence of the cross-disciplinarity of the Media Art. There is a rationale of unlimited resources attached to the idea of the digital, in part because it is still understood as an immaterial virtuality. What is more, rather than becoming obviously material due to its more known relations to humans, waste, or servers, digital immateriality hasn’t disappeared.
classified into three kinds of cells, each type responding to visible light of different wavelengths on the electromagnetic spectrum. Long cones respond to light of long wavelengths, peaking at the colour red; medium cones peak the colour green; and short cones are most sensitive to wavelengths of the colour blue (Guyton and Hall 577–589). According to media theorist Friedrich Kittler, it is very likely that the development of colour images in media technology – the RGB system, as well as luminance and chrominance – only became possible after the discovery of such cells in our eyes (Kittler 38). His argument is that “we knew nothing about our senses until media provided models and metaphors” (Kittler 34).

To deepen the discussion, we shall observe a specific operation related to senses and sensors: the translation of materialities. Besides insights from my practical experience and from Swiss theoretician Rainer Guldin’s ideas about the work of Vilém Flusser, the technical definition of sensor by Fraden also supports me in using here the term “translation”. An example of such an operation is the discovery of the photosensitive element selenium. In 1880 at Bell’s Laboratory the phonograph was invented, a telecommunication device that transmitted speech on a beam of light. The receiver was a parabolic mirror with selenium cells at its focal point. When sensitive materials are illuminated with electronics and digital processes, the creative possibilities of human beings are refreshed. When Vilém Flusser discusses the zero-dimensionality of digital media, this means that they offer us the possibility of gathering all materialities in a lowest common denominator and, in a second step, transform them in other possible materialities. It is a play in the flux between the abstract and the concrete worlds. In other words, this aspect of digital media drives us to translation issues, once they theoretically allow us to translate anything into anything. Guldin suggests it is possible that Flusser’s media theory is a development of a more complex, unfinished theory of translation, an argument exemplified by the Flusser’s term ‘Medi- umsprünge’ (Guldin 73).

It might be possible then to look at the Medius which came through the lens of translation. What kind of translation has been done? Why are we so obsessed with translating? The Italian humanist Leonardo Bruni was probably one of the first modern thinkers to write a scientific treatise about the issue of ‘translation’ in the fifteenth century. Later in the twentieth century, other theoreticians explained the term ‘translation’ to the realm of art, media, and technology. According to media theorist Michael Renov, in the concept of ‘translation’ reaches beyond language to encompass ontological and philosophical territories. Moreover, it is not by chance that the concept is also used in Molecular Biology and Genetics, using the term translation for the process in which cellular ribosomes create protein. A broad spectrum of uses leads us to understand translation as playing out in the middle space between distinct systems. Genesis (1999), by the artist Eduardo Kac, is an example that nourishes this topic in the realm of Media Art. The key element of the work is a synthetic gene translating a sentence from the biblical Book of Genesis into Morse code, and converting it again into DNA base pairs. The ‘Genesis gene’ was inserted into a bacteria and the audience, via the internet, could turn on an ultra-violet light in the exhibition space to cause real biological mutations in the living organism, which at the end was re-translated into the Genesis book. Demonstrating the human obsession about translating and its implications, this artwork is very good at constructing the metaphors of the most current problems of translation: ambiguity, noise, and subjectivity. As long as each system has its own structure, it is absolutely impossible to find exact correspondences in both universes. That also explains the difficulties in translating poetry. Arbitrarily the translators find the most convenient correspondents. And it is not different when this idea is transferred to the realm of materialities. However, media artists may ignore their activity as translators, being responsible while manipulating materialities and the otherness (Ricour 25), and therefore the very materiality of their creative matter.

Considering this, I see the challenge for the media artist today as discovering why we translate. Towards a ‘material philosophy’ or a ‘philosophic engineering’, I interwine this conceptual framework with a practical experiment, creating a project called Self-portrait of an absence. Playing with the translation of materialities, would you like to hear the sounds of my blind eye? The Self-portrait of an absence is a sound generative eye-tracking device attached to my blind eye. The device is programmed to generate soundscapes of my subjective experience. It translates light into sound. The device shares an absence; it translates an intimate experience into a universal experience. Voice transcends an intimate experience into a political experience.

Voices are both the very texture of the social and the intimate kernel of subjectivity (Dolar 16). Voice is our internally housed, liminal technology; an embodied and richly dynamic media with the ability to communicate beyond the content of what is said. Voice is an inconstant material, and in this way it is responsive to, and experienced with, uncertainty. Embodiment is a fluid and negotiable experience in which bodily skills and action inform perception and thought. Body image describes our perceptions of, and emotional attitudes towards, our body. Body schema is a sensorimotor system that maps our body in space, enabling our capacity to carry out intended actions and movements, often without our conscious attention. Images which we translate are closely related systems (Gallagher 24); they inform how we see others and ourselves. Body image is informed by our cultural and interpersonal relationships, that contribute to our constructed sense of self, and in this way plays a role in body schema – in what we believe we have the capabilities for. Even the voice images play a role in our voice schema. How we perceive our voice impacts on our capacity for voice. As the tone, pitch, volume, gender and other voice-specific qualities are both what we perceive and what we perceive we perceive, I suggest, it is also possible to add to this a feeling of being heard, just as one experiences a bodily sense of being seen: “To see, then, is also, by implication, to be seen. Seeing entails having a body that is itself capable of being seen, that is visible” (Grosz 101). The conscious awareness of being heard can be presumed to play a significant role in our sense of self.

Works cited:


and attitude towards the validity of our voice, the experience of being heard, and the value the agent places on their own voice, provide a ground for what the agent perceives as possible, or within her capabilities.

In relation to voice we could consider that in everyday situations we know the capabilities of our voice, the range and audibility to an extent, and therefore our reach in communication. However, if we choose to speak we expect to be understood and this is broadly unchanged within our local environment, yet the circumstances of our speech (background noise or echo, one-to-one or group conversation) are in constant flux, and the voice must respond accordingly: to be heard, to be understood, to take account of the distance of the hearer, etc. When addressing an audience, via the camera or directly, our voice image will contribute to our ease or dis-ease, for example, the other obvious catch of our voice in our throat. These are the sounds of inexpert voice in my own work that my professional sound mixer suggested should be removed. These are richly dynamic properties of voice that do not attempt to emulate or converse but rather openly acknowledge the subjective and constant negotiated experience of embodiment. Voices that divulge the inner and uncertain in this way, offer a potential route to disrupt the reliance on reason and instead to address the actualities of current public and political discourse. Reason functions contrary to a principle of inconstancy and uncertainty. Reason is a metrics exploited within an ideology of excess to dismiss practices outside of established forms of power (Rose 260), and the hierarchies of address they adhere to. In the context of voice this translates to a lack of value afforded a voice that is not certain, solid or singular. Embodiment and extended mind work in tandem. Extended mind is a process of perspectives engaged with the mind and body with an external object that offers new opportunities for the agent, and which the brain has come to treat as part of the body (Clark and Chalmers). There are particulars of engagement that need to occur for the brain to consider an external object an object of extension. To consider voice as the object of engagement in the context of excess, certain particulars of engagement can be explored through ‘address to camera’.

The voice-object presents the agent in the moment of speech. The voice-object describes the subject-voice returned (object-voice) to the agent between mind, body and world. In extended mind, the object of extension takes account of the relation of the speaking agent to the extended object – Mitra Aazar

Comments:

NN: Look into the subjective point of view. Putting the viewer into the action is a cinematic convention. But nowadays there’s images produced not to be seen by a human gaze. How would you treat these images in relation to the POV crisis?

NN: Selfies and protest combine – to produce new kinds of visualities and political subjects – new visual regimes based on online/offline circumvention, where POV becomes a kind of index to forms of power. What has changed from a politics of representation as articulated by 1970 film theory and post-strucuralism to current forms where new visualities are performed by machines and algorithms?

NN: You describe how an ontological problem turns into an epistemological problem. “Maybe the becoming CCTV of the POV (and viceversa), and the becoming geography of territory (and viceversa) is at the base of the confusion between fiction and reality.” I was wondering what this ‘maybe’ implies for you? One could simply argue that this _is_ (is not) the case, but perhaps the confusion (beyond the yes/no dialectics) is also part of your point? At least the indeterminacy of these phenomena’s status seem to be important to you.

of what is said is the speaking agent who hears herself through the silent listener. Address to camera facilitates hearing oneself back as the speaking agent accesses an imagined audience via the silent, listening camera. The imagined audience is the intended hearer of the voice, present at the time of address but only in the mind of the speaker, and in this way the speaker is talking to himself. In extended mind, the object of extension participates in a looped dynamic with the agent between mind, body and world. The agent’s behaviour and thinking is altered by the particulars of the perceptual engagement enacted across the looped dynamic, which produces a ‘new version’ of the agent. Fluency in these relational dynamics of address to camera could be said to produce a version of the agent that experiences a sense of being heard. For the experienced user, for example, the politician or spokesperson, the self-conscious voice in address to camera produces an exceptional version of the agent engaged in a looped dynamic with their self as other. Address to camera in this light predominately adheres to established hierarchies of address, in providing opportunities for those experienced and engaged within them to dominate discourse. Yet this intimate dynamic offers an opportunity for the individual agent to recruit their own voice as a political tool by extending “private voices” and “inner landscapes” (Rose 260) to the openly subjective and fully embodied, into a public domain claimed and secured by reason. Just as one experiences a bodily sense of being seen, the hearer implies having a voice that can be heard. Just as one experiences a conscious awareness of being heard, the bodily sense of being seen is an equitable form of subjective return: to see implies having a body that can be seen.

POV (Point of View) is not only an expression referring to a certain way of shooting porno movies. From an aesthetic perspective, POV and the notion of the embodied image and its excessive proliferation has also become nowadays politically relevant, especially in relation to the dominant media and its expansion, the virtualisation of the body (Closed-Circuit TV) or Drone imaging as metaphors of a centralised (yet already mobile) panoptic gaze. Here, I’d like to start a political epistemological cartography of the processes of abstraction of the POV (and of the body), in relation to the virtualisation of the gaze, in the compulsion of the production of image production, especially in the context of a crisis. The process of virtualisation begins as a slippage of POV as an embodied relation between the mute, the user and audience, into FPV (First Person View), where POV is remotely wireless from the POS (Point of Shot), and the user controls the device “from the producer or pilot’s view point” (Wikipedia). When FPV frames from a microscopic perspective, medical imaging manifests itself as a very peculiar form of disembodiment, whereas when it frames from a macroscopic perspective, CCTV and Drone imaging manifest themselves as last degrees of actualisation of disembodiments. POV, FPV and CCTV are indeed the macro-regime of visibility, with which to organise a post-phenomenology of the anthropo-technical manipulation of the gaze, and of its experiences of being circuiting.

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He uses the term M6N or being-with, to understand being as always already shared being. According to him, there is no way to understand the meaning of being other than as shared. As I find myself in the world, I have already shared this world with others. Being cannot be separated from sharing, and the others come into appearance as others because of this sharing. This is why sharing in the commons, as described by Ostrom, defines a political subjectivity. To me, it also offers a point of departure for understanding why an economy of exchange on the way to totalizing itself, as in the current advance of neoliberalism, has such difficulty with the notions of othersness or difference. Exchange must, in order to function, render othersness or difference meaningless – turn it into a “face” as Zizek says. The only meaning that it leaves for othersness is the unrestrained negativity of random violence, which is just another caricature of a quest for meaning.

Comments:

NN: The digital humanities is typified by overviews of massive scope rather than attending to detail and singular instances. DH as an umbrella category and hot-topic subject I think is influenced by the financial associations of Big Data.

NN: What in the history of culture is select/elected to become permanent and stored?

NN: “Media cross one another in time which is no longer history” (Kittler 1999, 115)

NN: What happens when all of our cultural heritage is mediated through a browser window, in a small screen at 1080×740 resolution? Does this imply a flattening of the texture of these histories as they are framed in a uniform way? Does the ‘interface effect’ render it all surface and no substance?

X Media Archaeologies of Digital Humanities, Mediation, Cultural Heritage and Archivalu, Cansu Topaloglu

becomes a ‘Droney’ – basically a (POV) Satellite in a Drone PoV system of Big Data. The turning into a Selfie of a Drone imaging is matched by its opposite, the turning into a Drone of a Selfie, as in the case of ‘Building’, “the act of climbing on the outside of buildings and photographing ‘artificial structures’” (Wikipedia), and - I would add - taking (POV) Selfies on top of them, historically and now the processes of POV disembodiment are simultaneous to those of CCTV (or Drone) embodiment. The offline/online circuiting of the gaze between construction and destruction The processes of POV disembodiment can also be read as the Promethean attempts of its own re-embodiment over the Internet, as the excessive pornography available online proves to suggest, as much as the number of absurd challenges (as with the #Firechallenge, or #Kyliejennerchallenge), where the Internet embodiment in extreme ways with their bodies, while taking Selfies. The regimes of visibility connected to the POV processes of abstraction can be observed in the contradictory affordances of their online/offline circuiting, and POV disembodiment seems indeed to happen in parallel with another process, that of the Internet embodiment and its taking the opportunity to conceptualise the Internet, not anymore as a simple interface, but rather as environment and behaviour. Selfies are not only the beginning of POV disembodiment, but also the consequence of the Internet’s domestication of the gaze, and of its embodiment into offline behaviour, fully oriented to an uploading phase. The conjunctive as the offline modality of becoming-other and developing singularities by enhancing differences is replaced by the more functional, the further recombination of elements of a given relationship, according to principles of similarities and compatibility (Berardi), while the shrinking of the offline space of appearance operates, with a new online space of appearance, suggesting an ontological changing in the relation between reality and virtuality, territory and geography, offline and online. The colonisation of the POV is a process that happens in the offline/online circuiting of the gaze, and in the affordances (Gibson) offered by the “military-entertainment machine” (Gibson) offered by the “military-entertainment machine which, whatever use one may wish to put it to, produces homogenizing effects of power.” (Foucault)

Digitisation has opened up history in many sedented ways, yet the technology – cansu topaloglu

Digitalization has opened up history and historical sources in unprecedented ways, yet the technology does not come without tensions, costs and unexpected set of alliances. In fact, for historians, educators, administrators, and the public. Digital archives are often themselves an interpretative model open for reading and inquiry, and within them, whether marked-up texts or hypermedia maps, derive from a complex series of authored stages (Schreibman, Simpson, Unsworth). Through the scope of his understanding on humanities and media studies, 102

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Friedrich Kittler investigates media systems for transmitting, linking and archiving information through ‘old media’ and investigating the functionalities of power in the age of technical media by providing interesting perceptions. In a Foucauldian sense, both technical and archiological approaches are highlight- ed through Kittler’s prominence on the significance of the technical concept of inscription (Parikka). Depending on Kittler’s theories, the process of mediation from traditional to digitised, investigating historical embodiment and conditions of knowl- edge expresses a significant matter.

In a Deleuzian sense, digitisation of archi- val objects and scholarly journals are deterritorialised and this jeopardises the physical medium of the objects. In accor- dance with the hybridity of medium spe- cific analysis (MSA) through the scope of materiality, it is seen that a number of institutions follow certain rules limiting the access to their collections along with expanding their policies experi- menting of ‘digital surrogates’ to be able to preserve both the original and digitised replica by the development of obtaining methods of reproducing original materials. Unquestionably, impending productions of historians (and potentially curators) are likely to be far more conversant than their ancestors with digital replicas and re- productions, which indicates the fact that they are expected to recover other approaches to history, the decreasing con- tact to physical evidence of history are not likely to exist without consequences for notions of history (Newell).

Data and Network

The physically of the digital technologies which signifies an essential constituent of archival nature, articulates through the ‘deterioration of the substrates of storage’ (Parikka 129), in addition to the development of the digital. Through the scope of materiality of the medium, digital objects are not expected to be recovered/ restored as stable objects; any attempt for constructing, in a machinic milieu and softwarised medium, a transformation, of the material and presents dynamics and particular modifications (Parikka).

The PC revolution and the rise of the internet enhancing the speed and disk capac- ity of computational technologies led to another phase through the law of expo- nential increase. For historians, facilities were offered by the new computational medium following this phase and advanced networking capacity of internet. A vast network of systems and data, personal computers and software has become widely common since information technol- ogies have hugely advanced (Schreib- man, Siemens, Unsworth).

The data immersion documented within interfaces is accepted as a significant compared to traditional human apprehen- sions in terms of processing. In this re- gard, constructing data within a medium excludes human perception in calcula- tional and sequential operations of cyber culture no longer require a subjective wit- ness (Berry), which creates an irony with the notions of the human in the humanities of the digital age.

‘History from Below’

Old Bailey and Bentham Projects – both of which are involved with with more individ- ual activity to create a digital medium that encourages collective information and free resources enhancing community engagement through ‘archiological studies – represent computational linearity in the materiality of a cultural heritage. Attempting to preserve historical objects referring to the concept ‘intangi- ble cultural heritage’ indicates fundamen- tal matters aligned to the ‘accessibility’ of archives.

The hyper-textual design and character of the background materials, hidden information construction modelling, and the system for capturing pictures and content was each made particular for this task, and was informed by the undertaking particular historiographical plans and aspirations for making a ‘history from below’ (people’s history) which emphasises the concept of a ‘history from the masses’ engaging with the notion of ‘accessibility’. The interfaces of the projects were delib- erately intended to lead a mass open group of community into immediate and compassionate engagement with the social history of working individuals. It is accepted that these projects are in- dicative of the type of digital repositories which have been created for humanities researchers. The undertakings permit enhanced analytical methods and investi- gation of essential sources and data, en- couraging a researcher in their errand and permitting better approaches to incorpo- rate, compare and information (Warwick, Tew, Nyhan).

It is in the nature of digital networks themselves to generate more than will be deleted, and that the use of data is dis- placed from any original components. In a digital network thus characterized, a system of equivalencies is impossible, and scarcity reveals itself as a social construc- tion when access restrictions are technologically implemented.

The Internet as we know it today arrived from two directions: one ‘top-down and the other bottom-up’ (Lanier 27), the cumulative result of mili- tary and governmental research along- side the efforts of independent computer scientists, programmers and entrepre- neurs. To many the decentralised nature and universality of the Internet, both expressions of the ‘universal and non- discriminatory’ (Semeniuk 47) principles of its design, seemed to promise a wider decentralisation of power and the creation of a new global commons, as the collec- tive knowledge of the world became universally available. For creative and intellectual collaboration over the Internet became possible. The revolutionary po- tential of the Internet to usher in an era of the ‘real’ world. The internet, according to Steyerl, “is undead and it’s everywhere” (cybersyn, chile 1971–73)


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ogy and us are becoming increasingly blurred: “Computers are not just machines, they are people. They think and they hide. They lurk under the skin and dissolve in the cloud.” (Liliana, “Turing Complete User”)

Computing processes are ubiquitous yet opaque. Computers are disappearing as discrete objects and are absorbed into all other objects, from watches to toasters, in the ‘Internet of Things’. An interface is no longer an interface but an experience. Many of the leading contemporary technology companies actively pursue the development of software interfaces that are both intuitive and ‘invisible’. When the interface disappears, the user too becomes invisible, when the term user is a useful reminder that a computer is a programmed system designed by another and is not neutral. To fail to recognise that a person is a user of a system puts an ambivalent term between poiesis and techne, between poietic revealing and also with techne, mastery. Heidegger associates art with the technological that gives art a unique meaning. This is also why Jean-Luc Nancy can say “meaning is the sharing of being.” But in corporate social media and the sharing economy, subjectivities are formed through structured forms of communication that prefer to call “sharing,” benefiting from the anti-economic properties of the digital (its excess) and the connotations of niceness that come with sharing. These subjectivities are shaped to match business plans, they form around the users’ status as customers, as subjects of exchange. But meaning cannot be exchanged, only shared. This is why so much of social media communication is either commercial, or trivial, as in the classic cases of cat videos. There is an erosion of meaning through the dominance of exchange, and a loss of sharing of meaningful content, because what matters to the provider is the profit that comes from customer engagement, from making users do things that affirm their status as customers. But this is never really present, they are also never really present. So if to be bored is to be present then radical boredom brings us back to Heidegger and his concept of Dasein, being in the world, wherein human existence is grounded in the body and in the specific place in which we are located. “Radical distraction” demands a permanent state of receptiveness, a temporal state radically different from the ‘being present’ of Dasein. The temporality of the network world is one of urgency, “just in time” rather than “in the moment”. Zygmunt Bauman describes this as “the insubstantial, instantaneous time of the software world” (118), incommensurable with a time of irreversibility from experience into “exhaustion of meaning” (Ibid). Exhaustion is the inevitable result of the over-participation and over-sharing demanded by the network world, yet withdrawal and recuperation are not necessarily solitary and isolated acts. As Jan Vormann writes, “the exhibition of exhaustion produces public bodies” (107).

“With digital images, a radically different automation mode appears. Let’s not forget that digital images have two fundamental characteristics that distinguish them from the images mentioned earlier[from photography to television]: they are the result of an automatic calculation made by a computer. There is no longer any relation or direct contact with reality. Thus the image-making processes are no longer the work of a human artist. Unlike the fluid visuality of the painting, the immediacy it’s a challenge for our perceptual realism. (1977), Heidegger describes how in a technocratic society all things “live under the rule of instrumentalism” (Bolt 75) in which the earth is a resource that can be understood through technological means. However, Heidegger’s technology is more than just means: it is a “challenging revealing” (16), a system of thought which orders the world and drives out other ways of thinking outside of its particular system of enframing (Bolt 75). The instrumentalising effect of this reduces the world and humanity to a “standing-reserve” of energy (Heidegger 17). In opposition to technological enframing Heidegger sets out poyesis, (10) a mode of bringing-forth presence that privileges “openness before what is” (Bolt 80) over ordering and mastery. Heidegger associates art with poetic revealing and also with techne, an ambivalent term between poyesis and technological enframing that is the etymological root of the word “technology.” It is both its likeness to and its difference from the technological that gives art a unique power to unsettle an instrumental view of the world: arts “accursed share” of non-recuperable excess (Bataille). A refusal to share and engage with digital network culture can be a powerful statement. We are surrounded by anti-boredom devices and we can be bored as overwhelmed by information overload, but it’s a mediated form of boredom that allows no room for thought or reflection. The sociologist Sigfried Kracauer suggested that only “excessive ordinary, radical boredom” (Kracauer, quoted in Morozov “Only Disconnect”), as opposed to the “radical distraction” of a real-time news feed, could reunite us with our heads and our bodies. Boredom allows us to experience the world at different temporalities and to reimage both our present and future conditions of existence. To Kracauer, boredom is not only our “modest right” (303) to do no more than be with ourselves, but also “the necessary pre-condition for the possibility of generating the authentically new” (301–2). If an individual is never bored, then they are also never really present. So if to be bored is to be present then radical boredom brings us back to Heidegger and his concept of Dasein, being in the world, wherein human existence is grounded in the body and in the specific place in which we are located. “Radical distraction” demands a permanent state of receptiveness, a temporal state radically different from the ‘being present’ of Dasein. The temporality of the network world is one of urgency, “just in time” rather than “in the moment”. Zygmunt Bauman describes this as “the insubstantial, instantaneous time of the software world” (118), incommensurable with a time of irreversibility from experience into “exhaustion of meaning” (Ibid). Exhaustion is the inevitable result of the over-participation and over-sharing demanded by the network world, yet withdrawal and recuperation are not necessarily solitary and isolated acts. As Jan Vormann writes, “the exhibition of exhaustion produces public bodies” (107).

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Wolfgang: What drives me is the belief that with a better understanding of sharing we can gain more clarity about the limits of exchange. This is necessary, because the current neoliberal ratio-
crack in the concept. Another friction I see in the fact that neoliberalism expands its logic of economisation into all possible domains of life and, through the sharing economy for example, has
Cornelia: ‘Heterotopic’ as Michel Foucault describes
nor private, neither here or there, they are
observation is massively changed as visibility
extend our notion of the visible experience
acting outside these platforms is a very hard choice. Much of today’s art success depends on reach and popularity via online social media and networks (Aron and Vermeulen 206). Online, every artist has an audience to find. Following culture makes audience engaging and interacting between artists and audiences instant. Artists can have instant feedback on their work and
The Mixed Reality Effect: Audience and Artwork
As technological innovations continue to extend our notion of the visible experience we now recognize ourselves as both
the archetypical meme is instantly recognizable: a cat, dog, or frog; a celebrity or pop cultural icon; his or her
and memes that are dead
also due to the revolutionary of digital networks. It is not inherent to digital technology, as for instance the case of Wikipedia shows.
Connel: To conclude our little conversation, one could say that “sharing” as an essential form of being with others has gained a new dimension through digital technology. At the same time this new form of sharing in the realm of digital files and knowledge is dependent on a technology which is totally embedded in the cycles of capitalist production, i.e. exchange. I think here is one crack in the concept. Another friction I see in the fact that neoliberalism expands its logic of economisation into all possible domains of life and, through the sharing economy for example, has started to blur a clear distinction between sharing as a way of being or becoming subject and economic exchange. What is at risk here? What is it that drives your research?
Olson, Marisa. “Lost Not Found: The Circulation of Images in Digital
This excessiveness makes the meme hard to theorise. In her recent book, for example, Limor Shifman defines the meme through three characteristics.

To paraphrase, the meme’s group, it’s collectively created and it circulates (41). This definition is useful, but it also fails to resolve a basic aporia. The meme is always at least more than one; not least, that is, because its character is double. Many meme. Much memes. Very memetics. A Dog is a Dog, an instance, and the Doge, the series.

3. Context

What is the return on a meme? Shifman’s meme-group nominalises the meme-series, adding up its instances to get the group. The meme-group is what Georges Bataille would call a “restricted”, enumeratable set (68). If a meme can’t be limited to its constituents, what general-economic excess does it put in to play?

The tendency to add the meme up is symptomatic. A meme is only a meme when it enters circulation. But, media studies so often fails to define what circulating is. Circulation – as spreading or moving through – is inscribed with its own media theory. It’s usually understood as the circulation of content through a medium. But this is problematic. When we ask, “what is circulated”, we get the answer: content. But if ask, “what is circulation?”, we get a tautological answer: circulation. The circulation of content. “Content” is the death mask of circulation. If the meme is reduced to content, it has no utility as an abstract.

4. Circulation

What does it mean for a meme to return? The impulse to reduce the meme to its instances does violence to its core concept. It understands the meme as both informational, and so seemingly free to circulate, but also phenomenal, and so defined through and for us. It elides the meme’s irreducible, nonhuman modus in-lying, because it assumes that the economy of the meme produces returns that can be cashed in by human(s), individually or in the aggregate. Circulation is the process through which something returns – but not necessarily to us.

The meme that enters circulation returns to itself.

5. Noalucirc

Share a meme.

Karl Marx’s concept of circulation can help us to think the meme’s return.

For Marx, the circulation of capital must be “grasped as a movement, and not as a static thing” (185). Internet culture isn’t capital, but we can assume an abstract, structural homology between their processes. Circulation forms a circle, “autonomising” a process that is abstracted from its contents (185). Shorn of the dynamics of value creation, this process – Verselbstständigung, achieving an independent existence – puts the meme-series into circulation. The meme goes viral, but you don’t!

6. Medium/Mediation

And: the meme mutates media.

The instance is a retrospective or counterpheno-

enon of circulation; the meme isn’t reduc-

able to its content. So, what kind of media is it? Bernhard Siegert has critiqued as media studies’ tendency to reduce media to device or interface (87). Image, GIF, Vine, video, text, sound bite, audio loop: the concept exceeds this idea of the medium – and recovers the circumflex. Sybille Krämer argues that mediation “must be understood as radically extrinsic, as the (never become alive, or die out)?

NN: It’s important to consider too that memes are not restricted to being visual elements, but actions.

NN: We should also think about the aesthetics of the ugly. That is, how deliberate or ad-hoc is the use of low-res images and MS-Paint practices?

NN: Is the ‘white male geek’ behind the creative process [of meme making]? the disappearance of a serious alternative to capitalism, this frontier has advanced into the political sphere, into subjectivity, and into rationality itself. Wendy Brown offers a compelling analysis of this process in her latest book, Undoing the Demos (2015). What is at risk here is the possibility of forming meaningful political communities in the most basic sense of the word, and along with it the possibility to communicate anything political. Therefore, an improved understanding of sharing may help formulate a political argument against neoliberalism, which is the only type of argument that can be expected to be effective. And I agree, for an argument to be communicated, communication channels are needed that will not instantly turn the sharing of ideas into an econom-

ic transaction. We can still learn from the tactical media movement in this regard, and perhaps with the dominance of corporate social media and their business strategies, tactics is even more important than before. Digital media do still offer a real, non-utopian possibility of sharing, and simply remembering that is a first step. The fact that criticism of the sharing economy is becoming more widespread is also a positive sign. It opens some space for a real discussion of sharing.
Since 2011, Aarhus University and transmediale festival for digital art & culture have organised research workshops of this kind, as part of an ongoing collaboration with shifting partner organizations (Universität der Künste (“In/Compatible Research”, Berlin, 2011); Leuphana University of Lüneburg (“Researching #BWPWAP”, Lüneburg, 2012); Kunsthal Aarhus (“Post-digital Research”, Aarhus, 2013); School of Creative Media, City University Hong Kong (“Datafied Research”, Hong Kong, 2014)). Each of these workshops has applied a research angle to the thematic framework of transmediale, and with an open call for participation they have also sought to open the festival up to emerging academic and/ or practice-oriented researchers. The outcomes have, as an experiment in new forms of scholarly publication, been presented in a series of peer-reviewed newspapers, as well as in an open access online academic journal, APRJA (A Peer-reviewed Journal About_). This newspaper presents the latest outcomes of a workshop organised in partnership with John Moores University and the Liverpool Biennial. Through highlighting excess in research, we address what is otherwise destined for waste, and the potential transgression of economised exchange. In terms of the (neo) presentation of research into excesses – such as online exhibition(ism), radical boredom, use of selfies, archives, honey trading, the circulation of memes, menstruation, voice, poetry and human prosthesis – the newspaper also addresses the limits of digital culture’s compulsory actions themselves. In other words, the authors seek to reconfigure understandings of media technologies, use and practices, and in various ways explore how the benevolent confines of info liberalism can be transgressed, shared differently, and where excess energy can be identified and other fantasies activated.

Writing excess

In an essay on Bataille, Jacques Derrida highlights how a general economy of excess relates to the production of meaning: or, of a potential ‘sovereign silence’ which interrupts articulated language. “The writings of sovereignty conforms to general economy [...] it relates its objects to the destruction, without reserve, of meaning.” (342) Insofar as the language of research (of scientific form), encountered in this newspaper, envisages a general economy, it is not sovereign in itself (indeed, there is no sovereignty in itself, as it is by its reference to loss, is not). However, if writing also defines certain formal limits of understandability, then how might we similarly look for means of escape from its determining effects? We are inspired by the way Franco ‘Bifo’ Berardi identifies poetry as a means of exceeding the established meaning of words and the reduction of language to information (in The Uprising: Poetry and Finance). To him, “poetry is the excess of language”, disentangled from the actions and limits of symbolic debt and financialisation. When it comes to research writing, we similarly hope for alternative streams and concatenated forms where the research object and method take on a different character. If research is to escape the imperatives of a restricted economy of production and utility then let us begin to explore the creative and critical energies of excess.

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