'Nothing But Sunshine': Writing Across Monsoonal Lines, Inflecting Electronic Arts

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Abstract: Wedded to the air is the substance of data, the drift of code in atmospheres of the natural. The word on the ground is 'locative' but the mood in the skies diffuse; commentary, memoranda, a trace. This paper contemplates the significance of place in the process of electronic writing, giving thought to particular negotiations of corporeality in the aesthetics of interaction. Considering the proposition of digital social networks, it evokes moments of generativity from the electronic turbulence of the air, asking of the silence its manner of speaking. One voice writes: 'Will reply to your thread in the next hour.' Another, 'I struggle dicing onions.' Contingent practices require provisional processes of recognition, philosophies which wrest surprise. It is with this spirit that the paper makes its theoretical engagements as buoyant as its affective intent—call it inspired, call it heuretic, call it a narrative towards flight. How shall we address the torrents of the air that tempt the entanglements of the earth?

Keywords: Aesthetics, Electronic Arts, Digital Communications, Cultural Studies, Corporeality

(A) Mid Air

WITH MY BACK to the sun I feel the evidence for heat. The indication is displaced by a movement aside yet the tread is caught in between. What I want is a shift into shadow. What I have confirms its arrest. The paradox may well be perceptive, a sensation, as it steeps my body in a thermal flow—I start with a turn away yet end in a mist of vicinity. Amid heat and its wane is an encounter with what Monika Bakke has called 'the dynamic aspect of air' which begins in dialogue with the elements yet tempts further their utility (Bakke 2006, 14). This persuasion is discerned by the artist Steven Connor who notes of the density of air that, unlike the proposition of openness which frequently speaks for the air, its qualities are not so, but more akin to those

> heterogeneous, spasmodic, tremulous, given to crisis. It is characterised by turbid swirls, gusts and clusterings, grots, hotspots, pockets and epochs, sudden saltations as well as sluggish dissipations. The outside air is never uniform, but hysterically zoned and striated. (Connor cited in Bakke 2006, 11)

From this rhythm of currents and purpose air figures as the 'choreography of sensations,' as what the architect Usman Haque understands as the animation of 'ephemeral materiality,' a dynamism which is structural yet buoyant and invites from built form responsive as well as variable interactions (Haque in Bakke 2006, 64). An affiliation with transience and a tendency toward reverberation in the production of matter (Munster 2006) are key to understanding this approach, and inject into the opacity of built form the permeance of 'materials

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like smell, sound and electromagnetic waves' reconfiguring 'architecture … the original broadband interface … as software: the ephemeral sounds,' as Haque explains, the 'smells, temperatures, radio waves, even social relations that surround us …' (Haque in Bakke 2006, 64).

Understanding these infusions as intimately those of terrestrial life opens onto a shift from 'what was once considered an unavoidable gravitational identity for all corporeal forms,' such as that presented in the writings of Paul Virilio (1997), to another which demonstrates that which '[may] … no longer be relevant in a highly mobilised world of information flows, and must give way to a fully embodied but aerial or even inspirational identity' (Bakke 2006, 27). If we follow this view we see that 'organic and non-organic elements of the environment … such as … electromagnetic waves, sound waves and natural radiation, mobile electronic technologies' show us that air is replete with human and non-human interchanges which interrupt '[e]arthly gravitational and arboreal order' to suggest a habitat constituted as air, and mobilised in air (Bakke 2006, 10, 26. See also, for instance, Irigaray 1999).

Moving conceptually with the volatile densities of air impels me toward the field of informational aesthetics, a field which allows an analysis of human interchanges to emerge through the pull of microgravitational persuasions. In this instance, I aim to be tempted by hesitation toward my encounters with what is inherently both the confluence and conflict of techno/space engagements (Bakke 2006, 25), an uncertainty which allows me to draw breath of a different kind, that which makes remote a representational model of understanding still concerned with 'technical and semiotic functionality' (Dunne cited in Haque 2006, 65). An approach toward a mode of inquiry which adopts the qualitatively 'open source' variables of (architectural) proximity can thus be enabled (Haque in Bakke 2006). It is hoped that with this rhythm of the miniature the ruptures and elisions in antecedent modes of reasoning—the 'differential relays' of historicized digitality, as Anna Munster has described them, diffuse into current striations of the social (Munster 2006, 6).

An approach to the digital which is concerned with anamorphic, or incongruent, zones of material production references the 'unassimilable, if infinitesimal, differences that slip away from the rhetoric of connectivity' that is otherwise called the elaboration of the baroque (Munster 2006, 6). Here, proximates, which, for this paper, are made of and dwell in the air, offer the view that electronic interactions converge matter and effect to create a form of respirational affect; a process of transformative and material dispersal (Paterson 2007). Reminiscent of the attention to connectivity given by Deleuze and Guattari in the 1970s, this process references the notion and effect of immanence, of what is existent in and extensive of all matter, whereby the air is no longer figured only an element nor spatially transcendent of somatic affiliation, as either above or below. Here, air inheres in what is 'nearby … within … and between' actual bodies and body spaces, making, at times forcing, the passage from a 'large-scale network [to] connect across to something nearby, and ultimately to everything else' (Ballantyne 2007, 32; Murray 2008).

Derived from the mathematical and philosophical opus of the baroque intellectual Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716), and developed extensively in the writing of Gilles Deleuze, a baroque method demonstrates how connectivity works through the 'notion and process of … [the fold, its] conceptual and aesthetic' dimensions (Munster 2006, 7). In studies of visual culture this method is well established for depicting the limits of classicist representation so often characterised by the 'disembodied optics and cogito' of the early modern era (ibid.). Yet, as Munster offers, '[t]he baroque is not the underside of classicism but instead

an entirely different project, one functioning through its own logic,' a logic of reverberation (Munster 2006, 7).

Thus in matters digital, following Deleuze, the fold can expose the limits of thinking separately form and process; what shape the digital takes from the exacting mould of informationalism to the processual philosophy of informational aesthetics. In baroque thought, form and process work together as the 'doubled movement-structure[s]' of emergent elements (ibid.). More closely, what the fold does for the digital is to show how it is constituted, what are its conditions of existence, beyond the (dualistic) order of the rational authorised by aggregated informationalism. As Munster goes on to explain,

> [p]osing the Cartesian subject as a good or an ugly underpinning of digital culture fails to account for the material and affective forces that contribute to this culture's continuing production and renewal. Within this framework, the baroque cannot be considered the historical genesis or origin of new media technologies. Instead … digital aesthetic experience [can be positioned] as a reverberation that enfolds and is enfolded by baroque inflections of the relations between bodies and technics. (Munster 2006, 7)

To draw on a mode of reasoning from the disparate yet reciprocal diffusions of a baroque legacy is to search for a way to '[mitigate] against, and [testify] to the failure of, a fully technologically connected and serially standardized world' to encounter instead elaborations appearing from the irregularities of 'aesthetic experience in digital times' (Munster 2006, 6). While aesthetics is a philosophy predominantly concerned with the study of fine art (Paterson 2007), here, it rouses the thought that, if dispersal is substance in this order of zonal relations, the question, 'With whom shall we respire?' (Irigaray 1999; Haque in Bakke 2006) which I may have otherwise asked, can be altered to invite

> [an] expansive conception of materiality [which] can help us to understand the sense in which digital aesthetic experience operates to draw intensive connections between the actions and affects of bodies and the forces of digital code. (Munster 2006, 85)

The paper continues with the smallest of gestures which nevertheless stride away from the fretful hierarchy of Virilio's verticality to consider the intensities and inclinations of 'new social media.' In this instance, these emerge from the storm soaked disappearance of an email exchange.

'Write Anything You Like, If It Takes You So …'

It's a Tuesday afternoon and I'm sitting at my desk. I log on and return to an interview with someone in Jammu, a state in the north of India. 'Hi Su. I just wondered if everything was okay and you received my reply yesterday?' (Su 2008, 3). At the start of this sequence, the day before, I'd written, 'I thought I'd begin by reflecting on the weather. This may seem a little strange …' (Su 2008, 2). I'd been procrastinating wildly by romancing the idea of a 'tidal writing,' as I called it. A mood I'd invented to calm the delay in the production of worthwhile words. What I really needed was less like a current and more like a typhoon. I went on, '… your remark about the unreliability of the power supply [in] the monsoon season intrigued me' (Su 2008, 2). A few hours later Su wrote, 'As luck would have it there was a

hailstorm yesterday (after a week of nothing but sunshine) … I've only just opened my inbox … Apologies, Su' (Su 2008, 3). 'That's fabulous!' I replied, 'No hurry …' (ibid.).

Earlier, we'd been writing about what Su called her 'animating' of technology. She was inventing for it its desires and articulating her experience of its intensions. 'Here … in Jammu,' she wrote, 'the internet seems to obey its own whims … Initially, it would create a great deal of anxiety … However, six weeks or so of being in India has made me more accustomed to its rhythms' (Su 2008, 2).

Su has spent much of the last six years studying and living in Adelaide (South Australia). She returns to India to visit family and friends regularly, and now encounters herself in ways that are, to quote Borden and others, 'strangely familiar' (Borden 1996), deferring to the random climate of temporal volatility when speaking of her renegotiated background. We were reflecting on questions of spatial location, of how one might think oneself in a given environment when faced with distinction from one's culture or surroundings. Su remarked that she was unsure how to 'classify' her digital presence, as one example, choosing the notion of a blur to consider events in her life. In particular, she turned her attention to negotiations of belonging:

> I guess in terms of work/recreation, real/virtual, home/abroad and many other perceived binaries, I feel the distinctions are gradually blurring. Even while trying to understand myself as someone from one culture, yet living in another, I now try to stay away from stereotypical ideas of nationalities/ethnicities. For instance, instead of feeling I have to "perform" every time someone asks me a question about India I'm not entirely sure about, I'm comfortable enough to say that I have spent my adult life in Australia, and am therefore not in the best position to answer. I would like to think that the concept of "fluidity" (both in terms of identity and location) best encapsulates where and how I am at the moment. (Su 2008, 4)

These words inform a research project I am performing into digital cultures and 'Internet communities,' in which the writing of emails is a research practice. It forms part of the suite of established ethnographic methods that have been budged sideways into digital climes and now inquire into 'networked communication environments' (Franklin 2004)[1]. From there they continue to present communicative challenges in their encounter with what Sean Cubitt has described as the often incoherent practices of the 'wireless dilettante' (Cubitt 1998), where incoherence has its own proximity to modes of transmission, in particular, to '[t]he proximity of electricity to information' (Cubitt 1998, 129). The project has an interest in tropes of 'ethnic identity,' the manner of its 'digital formations' and traversals. The theoretical terrain I negotiate is, as far as I can surmise, interdisciplinary, being influenced by inflections from transnational cultural studies, the study of media arts and, at times, the unresolved intersections between the humanities and the 'hard sciences'. What has become apparent is the difficulty of locating a language that speaks in general terms to the broad range of participants the project courts, while at the same time be thought relevant by them to their specific lives and relations to community.

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[1] This project was performed as part of a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship I recently held at the Hawke Research Institute, University of South Australia.

The difficulty, however, may accord some 'breathing space,' a chance to consider how 'pneumatic technologies,' those made of inspirational and intercorporeal encounter, lead us to conspire with the material densities of air and thus inexorably toward the Other, our 'co-conspirators' (Kaulingfreks and ten Bos in Bakke 2006). These are both abstract and material liaisons which ask questions from the notion of 'network' akin to those proposed by Munster, where 'relations between bodies and technics' echo the complexity of alliance between hazard and harmony (Munster 2006, 7).

Sean Cubitt, for instance, has commented on the figurative nature of proximity, writing of transmission that 'despite the complete disparity and dangerous enmity between water and electricity,' embedded in its function are 'metaphors of flow' (ibid.). The denotative link emerges from the material process of precipitation, the fall to the ground of vapour transformed into liquid. If it is true that 'water seeks its own level [and] electricity works ostensibly in defence of gravity' (ibid.), we can also consider here the productive paradox between seepage and force, intensity and flow, in ways which recall the materiality of air, not only its allegorical suspension. It is the fall which offers both flow and evaporation, and thus inheres a density of transformative potential in the language of the digital.[2] And it is the fall which 'allows all solids and liquids to be in the air … in a microgravity environment' of parabolic play (Bakke 2006, 25; Caillois in Bakke 2006). From this view, digital transmissions made of precipitation are concurrently in the air and on the ground, tempting the contiguous volatility of '(non-vertical) vertigo' (ibid.). Thus the language of location takes a different turn, having to encounter altered perceptions as well as material distress. This may be a necessary anguish, however.

My interest in forcing the logic of a 'respirational baroque' thus asks of the fold how its reasoning, that derived from the continuous invention and reverberation of differences, might handle the still-gravitational pull of the social at this time. It's possible that Su's new feeling of 'comfort,' for instance, marks a sense of belonging which is still rendered through the hold of the local, despite the experience of 'fluidity' she has. This is a local, which for some, arguably exists in atmospheres of established and emerging nationalisms (Ghandi 2006). Yet, in Su's case, it is a local which is also negotiated amid the equally complex matrices of digital production (Carter 2004; Huhtamo 2007). Su is a practitioner in the media arts whose production interests span creative terrain that she often finds is 'too genre bound' for the 'era of transnationalism' that we inhabit (Su 2008, 5).

Here, questions of spatial organisation are posed from the specificity of a creative practice that intersects with the cultural weightedness of an otherwise disseminated transnational body (Miles 2006). Imagining media teleogogies as 'genre bound' understands them as artefactual. But when reimagined in dispersive cultural contexts, they emerge somewhat 'unshackled' from genus. Such unshacklings can be summarised, following Deleuze, by the itinerant moves of a deterritorialisation intent equally on transformation and continuity (Patton 2000), even though transnational spaces are not easily contextualised (Rocco 2006).

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[2] I acknowledge the work on the tenuous relationship between the 'digital' and the 'virtual' by Brian Massumi, following Bergson. It is beyond the scope of the paper to engage wholly in the discussion, however. And in this instance, I make a detour from 'complete' abstraction into the play of possibility via the densities of the air, not their immediate surrender to a 'systematisation of the possible,' in other words 'the digital,' as the sole route to an unsullied virtual. See Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002) 137.

Su writes a blog. It is both artefact in her own research and active repository for her changing ruminations on the world. Her entries inspired me to ask how she imagined her blog, if it was a space for exploring writing practices, and if she wrote for anyone other than herself. From my observation the blog does not necessarily invite interaction from others for the purposes of connection. Rather, it evokes a model of 'network' that speaks against only successive liaisons, persuading instead a distributed intimacy which bends less to the will of an uninterrupted flow than to its fragmentation:

> The blog is … a political/theoretical space in addition to being an emotional/creative realm. … My blog began at a time when there were a number of changes occurring in my life (emotionally, intellectually and spiritually), and this was probably a sort of creative coping mechanism. I had just begun my doctorate, survived a break-up, begun to socialise a bit more, and thought having a blog would be a healthy way to process all the new stimuli in my life. One can write a diary or journal under such circumstances, but in this case, I did want my writing and images to be "out there." (Su 2008, 4-5)

Su went on to say that she is 'probably writing to/for people who are reflective and perhaps even creative, but not necessarily academic or writerly' (Su 2008, 5). While I am often diffident about my status as 'academic and writerly,' I turn my focus uncomfortably to Virilio's footfall, feeling the false assurance of an earthly tread that 'knows [no other] planet's gravity' (Virilio in Bakke 2006, 26). I decide that when it rains in India the air behaves like a 'set of facts' about to be traded for 'the more naïve question of how and why we have been moved' (de Botton 2009, 27), and this for an aesthetics of hope made from patterns of the already indistinct (Su 2008, 4-5). I wonder further about the distinctive pull of locality, despite what we know about the dispersal of material movements that exceed local borders, the densities, and diffusions, of trans/nationalities (Iwabuchi, Muecke & Thomas 2004). What are the conditions which enable this speculation?

It is perhaps from Geert Lovink's observations in the recent text *Zero Comments: Blogging and Critical Internet Culture (2008)* that a sense of specificity and locality affiliate at the edges of 'flow' to reconsider what he terms is the 'vitalization' of the Internet, the 'tendency to overcode,' or 'indulge the carnival of difference and ignore underlying communalities' (Lovink 2008, 3, 131-160). However, it is somewhere between the 'so-called A-list … of influential bloggers [and] … Chris Anderson's Long Tail theory, which states that the true potential of blogs lies in the millions of blogs that only get a few page views per day' that insights about Internet culture will emerge (ibid.). This surely celebrates the perceptive promise of my blog, which has for some time 'overcoded' the first two words of Lovink's book title. Nevertheless, it is worth considering his view that '[b]logging appeals to a wide register of emotions and affects' (ibid.), and can 'express and map micro-fluctuations of opinions and moods' (Lovink 2008, 38). Rejecting the 'all too correct position that blogs can only be studied through their different genres (political, educational, research, narrative, and so on)[,]' Lovink goes on to suggest that '[b]logs are the proxy of our time. It is a techno-affect that cannot be reduced to the character of the individual blogger' (Lovink 2008, 3). The vote here is for a disaggregated collective which shows us the limits of inquiry and the actual nature of electronic aeration.

During Lovink's period of research in 2006, 'estimates [of blog numbers] … came close to 100 million' with an equally diverse range of blogger topics performed in an ongoing

state of 'hypergrowth' (ibid.). More recent estimates suggest that approximately 113 million predominantly English language blogs exist, and a number in the vicinity of 72 million has been proposed for blogs originating in China alone (Helmond 2008). It remains 'an ontological question,' as Lovink has noted, 'whether criticism of emerging [electronic] phenomena is indeed possible' (Lovink 2008, xxiii).

We went on, however, to discuss Su's relationship with the notion of 'ethnicity.' She offered this in answer to her own question, 'Who is ethnic?':

> From an anthropological point of view, it seems that Euro centrism dominates philosophy and science, and hence anyone who is not Anglo-Celtic is "ethnic." However, I think it is the minority in any given location, whether in terms of numbers or voice, that constitute an "ethnic community." … In my case, I can call myself "ethnic" if I see myself as an Indian-born person living in an Adelaide suburb, but what if I [lived where the] majority [in Australia were] from the Indian subcontinent? I guess my point is that ethnic boundaries, especially in a transnational setting with constant flows of people, goods, capital and information, are as porous as national borders. (Su 2008, 6. See also Holloway 2000)

Yet the tonal accents of heritage, diaspora and displacement, it is still thought, are emphasised by signifying practices and the influence of socially hierarchical taxonomies (Ahmed & Stacey 2001; Bhaba 2006). Can making the body fold digitally, that is, '[changing its] surface, direction and volume … [also discern its] points of [dermographic] inflection' (Munster 2006, 7; Ahmed & Stacey 2001)? How do such proximates fall? If we consider the function of the medical term 'dermographia,' or 'skin writing,' as Ahmed and Stacey have, we see a conceptual basis for identifying somatic inflections in what might playfully be termed the interpellative fold. For these writers, dermographia can be understood as the

> writing on, or marking [of], the skin … [where] the substance of the skin is itself dependent on regimes of writing that mark the skin in different ways or that produce the skin as marked … [M]ore provocatively, [it] consider[s] the materiality of the signifier as produced by skin, by the weight of the bodies that are formed as they are marked, cut or written into the world. Writing can be thought of as skin, in the sense that what we write causes ripples and flows that "skin us" into being: we write, we skin … [L]inking writing to skin in this way … suggest[s] that both are processes that involve materiality and signification, limits and possibilities, thought and affect, difference and identity. (Ahmed & Stacey 2001, 15)

Does the inscriptive model, and here its demonstration of how meticulous the 'fluid, mobile, nervous and progressive' workings of reproductive thinking are (Muecke 2007, 14), also haunt 'relations between bodies and technics' (Munster 2006, 7; Bakke 2006) such that it answers Munster's call for an agitated understanding of the digital? Does it, in this sense, perform the 'doubled movement-structure' of the inter/face for a

> mode of folding [which] pushes us out toward a realization that "humanness" or "machineness" are nodes comprised of wound-up spaces, and that the inside of each—although folded in on itself to demarcate an individuated space—also nestles against the outside of another node'? (Munster 2006, 50)

Is this inter/face the edge of the surface, and thus the verge of a surface of borders, whose grammar is attuned to a zone of variability in the making of 'respirational sense' (Sommerer and Mignonneau 2003 in Bakke 2006)? Is this because the grammar of the air is a mode of ventilation, sensing, amplifying and recharging (ibid.) corporeal atmospheres with multiple points of erratic, if at times inflamed, contact? Do these echo the 'irregular contours' of conceptual mobility articulated by a philosophy of the surface steeped in Deleuze (Ballantyne 2007)? And with this, is surprise called to the (doubled) side of the inter/face, offering moments for pause in what has been described as the stream of spatial sensations that the 'aesthetic body' coalesces, following Husserl (Paterson 2007, 80; see also Husserl 1999, 11 cited in Paterson 2007)? Does this body instead consider the limits of modernity's legacy, 'the search for our modern identity in the ruins of the past,' as Nikos Papastergiadis has suggested (Papastergiadis 2006, 129)?

Giving a name to the continuous intricacies of change is often hard to achieve beyond a restorative logic intent on cessation, a logic which misunderstands the 'parafunctional' nature of alteration and waits instead 'for the super-camera that will one day record both … absence and … presence' (ibid.). But, 'if change,' as Papastergiadis notes, 'is the driving force of modernity, resulting in both losses and gains, then ambivalence is the subjective experience of our time, … a place where anticipation is always laced with nostalgia.' Yet, '[w]hat is,' in his words, 'the visible evidence of presence' (ibid.)? Is it when I can sense the effects of a storm I cannot see, the disappearance of the optic inside geometries of the imaginal (Paterson 2007)? Or is it when I feel touched by the casting into atmosphere of a tenuous and pelted signal? Is it in the appearance of ethnicity in modes of self-recognition, and here, in the reach for an optic made of locative refractions and drifting recollections, that sees Su describe herself 'an Indian-born person living in an Adelaide suburb' (Su 2008, 6)? What are the ontological structures that should concern us now about bodies and surfaces whose polarities interact with and travel through cultural practices of material indelibility (Borradori 2003)?

Haptics/Optics: A Poetics of Tension

Attempts to return the body to the digital, and to prefigure the logics for a material digitality, are many (see for instance Tofts 1998; Tofts, Jonson and Cavallaro 2002). They may well include this research venture which travels along haptic lines, the notion of the haptic striving toward a sense of touch as though it could be informationalism's unrest (see again Paterson 2007). But perhaps it is from this unrest that polarities intersect to produce 'sensate responses' which 'open corporeality up, extending it toward the flows and temporality of information's incorporeal spacetime' (Munster 2006, 180). These produce 'divergent and convergent relations that information and corporeality now plot in tandem' (ibid.). I would add that this coupling mobilises affective volatility through a mode of 'distant dwelling,' of feeling as though one is elsewhere yet experiences the subtleties and gestures of humanness within tropes of appearance and disappearance (Kac 2005, 139).

The word used to describe this sensation is usually telepresence, but it is perhaps more aptly called a 'volatility of the skin,' skin which is enlived by digital diasporas, themselves dynamised by the terse rhythms and temporalities of respirational sense. Phenomena such as 'squeeze-text' mobile messaging (Carrington 2004, 217; Crystal 2008), or the ambiguities of a missed 'pocket dialled' call, ventilate a digital beyond that which will attempt to 'reveal the fullness of culture [perhaps] like the way Kirlian photography can capture the glowing

outline of a leaf even when a part of it is missing' (Papastergiadis 2006, 129). Instead what we have is a greater partiality, a radiation of 'cutaneous contact' enlivened by the air and tempered only by a sense of its ethereal weightedness (Paterson 2007). And like a sculpture made of mist that strays from the path of hydration, this is a zone of contact that 'can tip over into insubstantiality at any moment,' vaporising, falling, swaying; (in)completely entwined (Janssens in Bakke 2006, 98).

Understanding the linkages that somatic aesthetics, 'our capacity for feeling, sensing and being affected,' makes, at times forces, with 'new media' therefore requires the inventive mobilisation of what can constitute a 'sense of touch, texture and mass, those qualities which inform our worldly encounters with things' (Paterson 2007, 83). And becoming accustomed to the extensive, as well as locative, 'rhythms of India' involves a spatio-corporeal negotiation which echoes the assurances of 'perpetual renewal' that the baroque seeks, where one can conjure as examples the great fountains of Europe for their liquid excesses, their enduring and extensive inclinations (Cubitt 1998, 129).

With such inclinations, this paper has attempted to explore digital media as significantly affective in both figurative and material ways. Affect, here, is multiple and complex yet processual, a zone of co-extensive touch (Paterson 2007). In this sense, respirational affect has been proposed as a point of access to others, a 'radical ungrounding of bodies' as the intensification of mobility today (Bakke 2006, 12). Bodies as co-extensive with digital technologies that 'monitor the air, searching for the optimal conditions for receiving and transmitting data' (ibid., 18), tell us that informational aesthetics induce what is barely articulable in zones of cultural contact, questioning their movement across bodies and space. Perhaps it was when Su wrote this about her blog, 'I'm allowing the aesthetics to dominate in the hope that I will see patterns as to what interests me and why' (Su 2008, 4), that we in turn see the irregularities which strain amid the allied effects of the fold and perform equally, there, as the idiosyncratic corporealities of (microgravitational) affects.

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Lisa McDonald is a cultural researcher and writer whose interests include relations between the humanities and the biological 'life' sciences, interests that follow her doctoral research into the cultural and institutional practices of fertility science. She has spent a number of years as academic staff in South Australian universities, and is currently performing a new research project titled 'Dispersing Corporeal Vocabularies: Life and Science in Trans-Asian Cultural Flows'. In her creative practice she enjoys exploring the intricacies of exchange between light and air and the machines that claim them ...

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