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> EDITORIAL

We live in a competitive sensory environment. This environment is saturated with alluring, proliferating and intense sense experience as technologies provide access to things previously beyond human perception. Bodies are cultivated to be aesthetically appealing and optimally available to the senses for commercial, medical and security purposes. The marketing of consumer goods continually appeals to taste, touch, vision, hearing, and smell, compelling other practices to engage our senses in what David Howes describes as a "hyperaesthetic culture." This issue of *Transformations* examines hyperaesthetic culture and its reconfiguration of our sensory experience. In doing so, it brings together analysis of new sensory technologies with discussion of the senses' role in the modulation of affect and our spatio-temporal experience. The problems and potentials for subjectivity generated by sensory technologies, and strategies for critical thought in such an environment are also explored.

In the first paper "A Critique of the Hyper State: Aesthetics, Technology and Experience," Melanie Swalwell introduces a recurring theme of the ambivalence of hyperaesthetic culture. She links the intensification of sensory experience promised by advertising for media technologies and smart drinks to the rise of a broader discourse regarding the "hyper state." This state sees the subject as forever able to incorporate new sensations and experiences in a project of self-maximisation, whether in leisure or work. This discourse of overstimulation and its technologies are ambivalent because they can engender new possibilities for subjectivity as well as be employed instrumentally. Swalwell suggests that Raymond Williams's notion of "experience" as "trying something" or "experimenting" is useful in theorising aesthetic engagement in this environment.

The articles by Kaima Negishi and Enrica Picarelli examine instrumental uses of the senses in work and leisure contexts respectively. In "Smiling in the Post-Fordist 'Affective' Economy," Negishi analyses how Smile Scan machines are used to assess and improve the naturalness of service workers' smiles so they have a greater affective impact and optimise their affective bond with the customer. Discussing Smile Scan's use in Japanese transit workers and noting that the face "is where most expression and communication of affect takes place," Negishi

shows how affective bonds between workers' and customers' bodies are used to encourage positive affects in customers and so modulate behaviour. The styling of workers' bodies is perceived and responded to non-consciously by customers, enhancing other kinds of communication. Thus the sight, sound, smell and taste of workers' bodies are harnessed by a post-Fordist economy.

Picarelli's article "Sensory Regimes in TV Marketing: *Boardwalk Empire*'s Chromatic Enhancement and Digital Aesthetics" analyses HBO's hyperaesthetic use of digital colour. Here the term hyperaesthetics refers to both an approach to digital design as discussed by Peter Lunenfeld, and a marketing strategy of sensorial mobilisation as theorised by David Howes. Picarelli observes that as an approach of consumer mobilisation, digital colour provides a cohesive identity across the television series and its associated multisensory products and promotions, such as whisky and clothing. It also aims to ensure that a series is received well by encouraging affective bonds between viewers and the series even before the series has been broadcast.

Returning to the notion of the ambivalence of hyperaesthetic practices, Erika Kerruish's article "Benjamin's Shock and Image: Critical Responses to Hyperaesthetic Culture" explores the space for critical thought within hyperaesthetic culture. Benjamin's understanding of the experience of shock in the modern city draws out the relationships between memory, sensation and reflection, explaining how overstimulation can disrupt critical reflection. Yet he also sees the terms of critical thought as found within the sensory technologies and practices of one's time, which makes his work especially relevant to analysing hyperaesthetic culture. In particular, Kerruish discusses how the notion of the dialectical image models sensory-specific critical thought by showing how visual culture configures the spatio-temporal relationships between ideas.

In his paper "Flying Objects, Sitting Still, Killing Time," Chris Schaberg highlights the distinctive temporality emerging from the oddly motionless experience of aeroplane flight. He notes similarities between the experience of waiting to fly and flying itself, which are apparent in the parallels between aeroplane seating and airline waiting room seating, and their representation in literary and popular culture. In seeking to save time by travelling by air, the shorter travel time becomes intensified, something to be endured. The difference between flying and waiting to fly is eliminated. Schaberg writes that "[a]ir travel exposes *timesaving* and *wasted time* to be bound in a tight knot," as seen in the portrayal of "humans as objects *sitting still*."

The final two papers emphasise how sensations are embedded in social and conceptual contexts. The relationship between the sense of pain and visual sense is examined by

Anthony McCosker in “Pain Sense: Nociception, Affect and the Visual Encounter,” in which he revisits the ideas of early twentieth century neuroscientist Charles Sherrington via the work of Gilles Deleuze. McCosker points out that pain’s affective force lies in a combination of elements, including the perceiving subject, the causal object, nerves and their impulses, and synaptic processes. Exploring such an integrative understanding of pain highlights similarities between the experience of pain and seeing another’s pain. Considering the relationship between images of vulnerability and the “integrative ecology” of pain suggests that the circulation of pain images in media and visual culture has social implications.

In the concluding article “Formatting the Senses of Touch,” Mika Elo explores the ambivalent role in digital technology’s haptic appropriation of things and events. In line with Derrida and Waldenfahls, Elo observes that touch is a pathic sense that goes beyond straightforward tactility so that “although touching might aim at haptic appropriation, something inaccessible and withdrawing, even untouchable remains inherent to the touched.” Using Freud’s notions of denial and isolation, Elo shows how this pathic dimension is negotiated and controlled by the touchscreen through the isolation of the body’s operative gestures into functional units. In this process tactility is prioritised over touching and its affective and social dimensions.