Van Orhari

Intersubjective Games: Vilém Flusser's Dialogically Synthesized Technical Images

> "We may be at the point of remembering how to celebrate. We may be at the point of finding our way back, on a strange detour through telematics, to being genuinely human, that is, to a festive existence for another, to purposeless play with others and for others."
>
> Vilém Flusser, *Into the Universe of Technical Images*

Introduction

Originally published in 1985, Vilém Flusser begins *Into the Universe of Technical Images* (2011) with a warning, foregrounding two trends that emerge following the advent of technical images. The first trend "moves toward a centrally programmed, totalitarian society of image receivers and image administrators", while the other heads toward "a dialogic, telematic society of image producers and image collectors." (Flusser 2011: 4) The book's closing chapter, "Chamber Music", details a dialogical model for technical images, one that would allow us to escape the totalitarian trend and move into the telematic one. Telematic society is one of augmented communication, creativity, and play. It is programmed (via apparatuses) in such a way that its members are freed from the logic of the market and thus can listen to each other again. Before I address the circuits that make this model feasible, we will look at the structure of what we're trying to escape from.

The way in which technical images functioned at the time of writing (and still today, I argue) was fascistic "not for any ideological reason but for technical reasons." (Flusser 2011: 61) Technical images produce sender-receiver relations: media conglomerates beaming unidirectional, "discursive media bundles" (Flusser 2011: 64) to the TV sets of individuals. The receivers become more and more isolated from one another, despite receiving the same sets of images.

This structure persists today, but with interactivity giving the illusion of dialogue. In fact, one could argue that there is a deep, collective yearning for dialogic media, to the point where any indication that the senders are listening is met with high praise. A sitcom referencing a meme, a post from X thrown up on a chyron during a reality show, a Twitch streamer acknowledging the chat. These are

not intersubjective interactions; they are the muffled whimpers of an unwitting focus group. Each of these examples I have given operates within a discursive program that filters out anything that doesn't align with the apparatus's goals. What was going to happen was always going to happen, there are no surprises. Material participation begins and ends at the decision to watch or not, if even that. Flusser calls these subjects "functionaries" of the apparatus. We are all functionaries, but we are not yet perfect functionaries and therein lies hope for resistance against the current program. (Baio 2015, 185-186)

It's impossible to deny that the previously stated examples are interactive forms of media, but like most interactive media, the relationship is asymmetric. This leads us to another term central to Flusser's media theory: program. Apparatuses impose their programs on those who use them, and the user has no agency in affecting the "strong interdependence between technology, its cultural techniques, and the formation of cognitive functions." (Irrgang 2023: 34) They are functionaries, whose goals have been supplanted by the apparatus's. By contrast, in the telematic society, all are programmers. Telematic citizens practice collectivized, dialogical self-programming. This need not be taken as a call for everyone to take a class in C++. Rather, it is a call for us to expand the limits of communication *via* our devices, not necessarily the *possible* functions of them. This takes us to our starting questions: how would dialogically synthesized technical images function? What do we need to understand in order to program them ourselves? How can we regain agency, authenticity, and the "experience of presence" (Chagas 2013: 14) by using them?

Games of Dialogue

Flusser's chamber music model is one of simultaneity, perhaps most easily imagined as a model based on jazz improvisation. The music being discussed is "not the sort one hears in concern [sic] halls but the sort experienced by those who meet to make music." (Flusser 2011: 162) Daniel Irrgang writes about Flusser's "utopian hope comparable to today's narratives of social broadcasting services such as YouTube—yet minus the implications of platform capitalism which reintroduce the mechanics of cultural industry through the backdoor of data economy," in which "former consumers of media become emancipated producers creatively replying, in a dialogical manner, with video images to the images made by others." (Irrgang 2023: 32) Flusser thought past YouTube response videos and TikTok duets, and toward a specific understanding of simultaneous dialogue, which I will explore through a proposal for a game.

Imagine if you will, an online cooperative two-player video collage game on a cellular phone. The game begins with both players digging through their saved videos, selecting one, then using a lasso tool on the selected video to cut out a fragment. A clipping tool is then used to select the duration for the lassoed video's loop. Both players place their fragments on the game board, which is a blank canvas. Neither player can see the other's fragment until both submissions have been made. Once both players have made a submission, both their fragments are presented simultaneously. If the fragments' placements happen to overlap, both become transparent in the overlapping zone, so that each player's move is visible. All subsequent turns will repeat this process until both players indicate they wish to finish the work and end the game. The hope is that this game will produce a similar effect to the music that improvisers *experience* as they play together, but instead of a dialogue of sound, we arrive at the foundations of a telematic dialogue. The finished collage is irrelevant to those who did not make it, except as it may be used for image fragments in future games.

Peter Zhang points to virtual whiteboards as a "technological foundation" (Zhang 2023: 53) of telematic dialogue. Virtual whiteboards do indeed support long-distance visual collaboration, but their programs do not guide users toward the state of "pure play" (Flusser 2011: 162) that Flusser sought. One would have to write out extraneous rules, outside of the whiteboard's program, that participants would need to make concerted efforts to follow. The chamber music model for telematic communication involves "participation (strategy) rather than observation (theory)." (Flusser 2011: 162) I identify two issues with virtual whiteboards as a medium for telematic dialogue. For one, we cannot summon images as fast as we can play notes on a synthesizer (though we're certainly on our way), therefore it is important that the proposed game involve a programmed simultaneity, in order to necessitate a strategic approach over a theorizing one. The second issue is that play should be habit-based, which is also not supported by the whiteboard's program. I will expand on the prerequisite of habit-based play later on.

In forcing both players to make their move before they can see their opponent's, the proposed game imposes improvisational spontaneity. One could draw comparisons to Brion Gysin's cut-up method (popularized by William S. Burroughs).[1] The cut-up method, through a Flusserian lens, reveals the program of linearity that writing imposes on readers. By breaking apart words and sentences, then stitching them back together *where they don't belong,* we encounter notions and images beyond the invisible boundary of thinkable thoughts. The proposed video-game aims to do the same, but taken two steps further. The first step simply being that the game uses cut-ups of technical images rather than

[1] For Burroughs' writing on the cut-up method, see https://www.writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/88v/burroughs-cutup.html.

print. The second step is what I wish to focus on, that being the usage of technical image cut-ups for dialogue with an other.

To further clarify the intentions of the dialogically synthesized image game, I wish to detail two different games that have similar structures to the DSI game. Those who have taken a comedy improvisation class will no doubt be familiar with the game *Mind Meld*. In this game, two players count down from three, then both say a single word at the same time. Then, in successive turns, the players count down again and try to say the *word in between* the two words generated by the previous turn. The dialogically synthesized image game does the same thing, but using technical images, while introducing embodiment to a medium that obfuscates it.

Following Paulo Chagas' recommendation, I apply N. Katherine Hayles' concepts of *inscription* and *incorporation* in my analysis of the video-game that I have sketched out. (Chagas 2013: 14) Inscription "is normalized and abstract, in the sense that it is usually considered as a system of signs operating independently of any particular manifestation." Whereas incorporation "cannot be separated from its embodied medium, for it exists as such only when it is instantiated in a particular hand making a particular kind of gesture," the example given being a "good-bye wave." (Hayles 2008: 198) The video-game places pressure on the separation of these modalities and makes visible that "incorporating practices are in constant interplay with inscriptions that abstract the practices into signs." (Hayles 2008: 199) Chagas might say that the game asks its players to *compose* (inscription) a packet that becomes an *improvisation* (incorporation) (Chagas 2013: 14) at the end of the round. Repeated rounds of the DSI game will cause incorporative codes to attach themselves to the image chimeras. These codes will be a mutual understanding between the two players. They will synchronize their connotations of the technical image chimeras: an audiovisual pidgin language for a new locality of two people.

It is often said amongst comedy improvisers that two people who know each other well will succeed in the game of *Mind Meld* quicker than two strangers. This is the embedded logic of the second game I wish to reference, *The Newlywed Game*. Flusser's telematic society is a global Newlywed Game, a planetary polygamy of dialogue. The draw of the Newlywed Game was the moment of catastrophe, when a husband would make a particularly egregious guess as to what his wife's answer to the prompt was. The husband learns his wife's real answer, but the wife catches a glimpse of her husband's internal image of her: she acquires new information from a mediated dialogue. In light of this new information, she may also file for divorce after the taping. For Flusser, "new information" (Flusser 2011: 67) is the lifeblood of revolution in posthistory (i.e. the world at-large after the advent of technical images). Without it, all revolutionaries remain "spectacular" entertainers, because they assist "the images in

dispersing us more and more effectively." (Flusser 2011: 66) They reaffirm a cognition ill-equipped for our posthistorical environment.

Are the "new weapons" of Deleuze's "Postscript on the Societies of Control" (1990) fed by the ammunition of new information? Or do they blow up mass media's "discursive bundles" (Flusser 2011: 81) and scatter the informed sticks, so that we may gather and organize them of our own accord? Flusser might argue the latter, that we need new, technical image games in which to play out all possible combinations of information, then store the new information from "catastrophic" combinations as artificial memories that "participate actively in the dialogue so that in them, past, present, and future converge." (Flusser 2011: 163) We can browse these artificial memories with "special, systematic finding aids—search engines, above all," (Jaffe 2019: 27) so that we may redeploy them in our subsequent games of dialogue.

If a search engine helps us find information within a space of collapsed time, the "virtualization of vision" (Galloway 2021: 56) makes that space viewable. In his writing on computation's (mostly) forgotten antecedents, Alexander Galloway points to computer vision as a "gnostic route" that can "multiply the points of view, distribute them in space, and favor parallel capture over diachronic series." (Galloway 2021: 57) This is how technical images create posthistory, by affording the multiplication of points of view. Technical images are "mosaics assembled from particles," (Flusser 2011: 6) and these particles are best understood today as pixels. Pixels, in their ever-shrinking nature, give us limitless visualizing power. This includes the visualizing power to see from the perspective of a free-floating camera in recordings of virtual environments. Thomas Jefferson's letters to John Jay on the French Revolution were of history, but the sum total of the Zapruder film and its siblings is a prototypical posthistorical object.

Uses of Particles

We find ourselves in a situation of pixels-as-sand. The dialogically synthesized image game is a means of sifting through the pixelsand with one another, to unearth the new information we so desperately need. In sifting together (quasi-synchronously), we would not only be exhausting all educated guesses of informative image-combinations, but we would also be engaged in a dialogue of embodied knowledge, provided that play rises to the level of habit. The image-dialogue at the habitual level would be "structurally elaborate, conceptually coherent, and durably installed without ever having to be cognitively recognized as such." (Hayles 2008: 202) Coming back to Hayles and habit, is it possible to

witness an incorporated practice, or experience an instantiation of embodiment, without a shared-location awareness of the bodies of others? What about without even avatars? Even in the oddest of internet spaces, profile pictures almost always still depict a body in one way or another.

The dialogically synthesized image game returns embodiment to communication. When Player One sees Player Two's video fragment appear, a spring-loaded embodiment is released: it jumps out at the player. Each player's fragment is resignified by the arrival of the other's fragment. The reveal at the end of each round is inseparable from its own instantiation, even though it arrives via custom symbols that were on standby. One could argue in favor of an option for a Live Mode for this game, where both players would have to have the app open at the same time before the current round's results would become visible. This might address some of the concerns that Dominic Pettman outlines in his book *Infinite Distraction* (2016), a manual for navigating the social desynchronization brought on by the algorithmic shuffling of our media feeds. Pettman argues that our collective (and potentially radical) passions remain indefinitely dispersed by the asynchronous arrangement of micro-experiences on social media platforms. (Pettman 2016: 36) Our continued engagement with these largely empty micro-experiences is driven by a "will-to-synchronize," the incessant urge to know what's happening in the "semi-magical 'lives of others.'" (Pettman 2016: 57) In examining Henri Lefebvre's theory of moments, Pettman considers what I would call *momentary software* as a path through distraction and toward resynchronization. Pettman notes that a Lefebvrian moment could designate a "stimulating game." (Pettman 2016: 72) This moment "emerges out of the humdrum routine of existence in order to better illuminate its contours and limitations." (Pettman 2016: 72) The embodied dialogue of the DSI game coaxes a moment out of the stream of mundane experience to demonstrate to its players again and again that it "is in the everyday that a possibility becomes apparent (be it play, work or love, etc.) in all its brute spontaneity and ambiguity." (Pettman 2016: 72)

In Gary Peters' essay "Improvisation and Time-Consciousness" (2016), Peters probes at the connection between the pluralized internal temporalities ("being-in-the-moment") of collective free music improvisation and empathy. Like Lefebvre's moment, the mode of time-consciousness experienced during improvisation confirms to the player that something meaningful is already baked into the "moment of moments." (Peters 2016: 450) For Peters, the improviser experiences "feelings of mastery and empathy that are countered not by unhappiness or yearning but, rather, by a vigilance and attention that 'listens' with icy concentration to the Absolute work that never arrives," and yet is "already here." (Peters 2016: 454) For Lefebvre (via Pettman) the moment is similarly "the attempt to achieve the total realization of a possibility." (Pettman 2016: 72) If Walter Benjamin identified mechanical reproduction

as stripping works of their aura, (Benjamin 1986) then I am pointing to one of the effects of *auraless* mediation: we are locked out of experiencing moments, so long as our technologies remain exclusively inscriptive programs that discursively order the technical images we use to interface with the vast majority of daily life.

I began the preceding stretch of thought by anticipating the suggestion for a Live Mode for the dialogically synthesized image game. However, a Live Mode is unnecessary for producing an incorporative gesture. At least to the extent that a player can remember the context in which their habit-based playing occurred, the moment that emerges from viewing the combined fragments is temporally portable. What was originally lost between input and output comes back more durable, after being processed through the properly rewired circuits of an apparatus. Now, I will discuss where we might locate the desire to play dialogic games, instead of splashing around in the pool of amniotic images that we find ourselves in.

Regrouping & Listening

Our media are ready to speak to each other, or at least form an imagaic jam band. But first, the performers will have to meet one another in the orchestra pit. The sequels, remakes and remasters thrust upon the public are no doubt a symptom of the culture industry's neoliberal radiation poisoning. Flusser's technical forecast of a fascistic trend aligns with what's on the marquee, but the public's exhaustion with decades-old intellectual properties seems to signal another precondition for the telematic society: the breakdown of the consensus between images and people.

"Cinemagoers, however, turn their heads toward the projector in irritation. They have paid to be betrayed. A consensus exists between them and the screen serving the interests of betrayal, a contract arising from feedback between the screen and the viewer. The contemporary cinemagoer is the result of having been fed by previous films, and the film on the screen is the result of having been fed by previous cinemagoers. The longer this mutual feeding continues, the stronger and more stable the consensus between image and people will become." (Flusser 2011: 54)

In other words, even when the service *isn't* free, you are still a raw material for the *next* product. Except that now, the wires in the closed circuit of market research, production, and distribution are beginning to fray: we see a micro-instance of what Flusser refers to as "entropy" (Flusser 2011: 17)

within franchise fatigue. Might now be the moment in which we move toward a consensus that dialogical media have futures that discursive media do not? It is not enough to remix what is already out there, for that may be the very reason we've landed face-first into the IP era. What would constitute a dialogically synthesized movie is a topic for future study, but the rough sketch of the "global superbrain" that Flusser gives before leading into his examination of chamber music might give us hints. "The superbrain," Flusser writes, "will play internally, it will dream a universal spectacle as a montage game of tiny parts, a black box composed entirely of darkened rooms, a universal orchestra made up entirely of chamber musicians." (Flusser 2011: 162). One could imagine a theater full of people on laptops equipped with privacy screen protectors, all playing an MMO version of the DSI game. The video fragments they contribute would be filtered, arranged, and melded together by an AI videos-to-video generator guided by a prompt. Bursts of video would be punctuated by frequent intermissions, to allow the director-viewers to refill the video repository that would inform the creation of the next scene. It would be a catastrophe in both the Flusserian and traditional sense. But now, having invoked a (reasonable, if perhaps premature) distrust of speculative fictional theatergoers, let us return to the discussion of film as it currently functions.

When we watch discursive technical images, we engage with a static other. Like the protagonist of Jon Rafman's uncanny short animation *Punctured Sky* (2021), when the computer screen turns black and we catch our own reflection, we sense that our screening was strictly internal. Once the afterglow of watching wears off, our working theory of other people stays unchanged, if not reaffirmed. A dialogical game creates the opportunity for an encounter with an other *out there.* Simultaneous image exchange with the other player takes place in the pixelgraphic universe: proto-brainscans being sent out in an intuitive manner, a manner that flies under the radar of our awareness with "an inertia that can prove surprisingly resistant to conscious intentions to modify or change them." (Hayles 2008: 204) The space beneath our awareness, the space of habit, is where our status as imperfect functionaries comes from. It is from there that we can engage with a dynamic other, rather than a static one. Przemysław Wiatr's examination of Flusser's specific understanding of intersubjectivity is helpful here. Wiatr provides a verb that describes what we are doing when we approach dialogue from the space of habit. He states that "in relation with the Other I do not look, I do not search for him (a theōria means, among others, 'looking/glancing'). Rather, I listen." (Wiatr 2019: 12) Our subordination to the (current) program of technical images has turned us into searchers. It is not that we do not wish to listen, it's that listening is an inaccessible feature within our apparatuses, hidden by an implied (but false) linearity.

Linear consciousness in a nonlinear media environment compels us to apply cause-and-effect explanations to all phenomena, because the other option is perpetual discomfort. One might talk down to those who cannot withstand discomfort and search for "easy answers," but masochism without a destination serves no one. Without a poetics of technical images, we retreat into classification and, in an ironic double meaning, typing. Our keys and buttons (both physical and those rendered on touchscreens), "permit [us] to choose but not to express [ourselves] (e.g., the television control panel)." (Flusser 2011: 31) The concept of *meglanguages* in K. Allado-McDowell's book *Parhmako-AI* (2020), a text comprised of "pruned" GPT-3 writings, is useful for imagining how dialogically synthesized images might help our keys access nonlinear programs (i.e. *typing* without *type-ing*). A meglanguage is a "technique for a type of synesthetic communication" that "does not try to refer directly to things." Instead, it uses "direct reference to paint a larger picture," by creating "hyperstructure, layers of parallel worlds, and the possibility of hypertime." (Allado-McDowell 2022: 301) Meglanguages, like technical image dialogues, are aware of past and future. They both use "layers of time to communicate the fundamental nature of something." (Allado-McDowell 2022: 302) In an interview published in *TAB UOL* (translation published on Medium), McDowell states that it wasn't clear as to whether meglanguages were "technically enhanced forms of communication, or a latent psychic capacity of the human mind." (Allado-McDowell 2021) This uncertainty is resolved by Flusserian theory: meglanguages are both. The telematic mind *is* programmed by "multimodal forms of imagistic communication." (Allado-McDowell, 2021) And this is because "the surfaces of technical images move away from a mimetic representation of the real to inscribe concepts as connotative, as opposed to denotative, forms of signification." (Nony 2023: 302) That is to say, a consensus of technical image connotations cannot be transmitted in the way that language imparts the connotations of words or culture links associations to symbols. Rather, our acquisition of what a technical image implies will have to be wrested out of its endless becoming, out of time via play.

Play & Control

I have alluded to the dialogically synthesized image game as an anti-control tool thus far. Perhaps the game is a Deleuzian weapon, and certainly it could generate posthistorical, technical cut-ups. This section will discuss the humanizing possibilities of the DSI game by looking at the fascistic structures its program stands in opposition to. In his monograph *The Digital and Its Discontents* (2024), Aden Evens

discusses the limits of the digital and the "altered consciousness" associated with "thinking like a machine." (Evens 2024: 175) The digital is embedded in "every corner of the world and every domain of human endeavor" to the point where "our interface to the quotidian reality in which we live increasingly resembles a digital interface and demands the same sorts of interaction for effective control." (Evens 2024: 176) Digital interaction is predictable on a structural level, (i.e. when I double-click a shortcut on my desktop, I can be reasonably certain that the corresponding program will open) and that predictability is soothing. However, when we return to analog zones, we find ourselves at greater and greater intersubjective distances. To put it in a Buberian framework, the machines *that we have now,* in their discretizing nature, cannot proliferate I/Thou relations, only I/It. (Buber 2004) Machinic thinking obscures the humanity of the other, even as the behavior of the other maintains its analogicity, its potential for unexpected behavior. Machinic thinking decays our ability to recognize subjects as subjects, and an awareness of this decay is responded to by producing paranoid knowledge.

Wendy Hui Kyong Chun's interrogation of Lacan's discussions on paranoid knowledge in her book *Control and Freedom: Power and Paranoia in the Age of Fiber Optics* (2008), is useful for considering how dialogically synthesized images could help mitigate our festering solipsism. Paranoid knowledge stems from jealousy, it is the awareness of what is "the object of another's desire." (Chun 2008: 248) What is outside of us appears whole, and in turn "we displace our own frustration onto the other's seemingly unified image, which we want to fragment." (Chun 2008: 249) The feeling of our own fragmentation is reinforced (if not made to seem certain), by the discretization of the digital. Connecting paranoid knowledge to instances of pseudo-voyeuristic "camming" in the early aughts, Chun states that "users forget that their view is mediated." (Chun 2008: 284) The cam sites' performers get to choose the cameras' locations, which means they choose the blind spots as well. As Aiden of the now-defunct spookycam.com tells Chun in an unpublished interview, users get "'a false sense of knowing you.'" (Chun 2008: 284) To forget that an experience involving others is mediated is to unwittingly employ machinic thinking outside of solitary machine use. This creates our present twofold dilemma: no one is a subject (a Thou) to us, and yet our epistemological confidence has never been so inflated. As Chun writes, "The mirror image must expose itself, and its minor imperfections must be attacked." (Chun 2008: 287) Those susceptible to ragebaiting may have specific dissatisfactions with themselves, but in all cases, there is a higher-order projection: everyone is functionally a robot except me, only I possess media literacy. And yet the site of our middle sheath amnesia (our habitual use) is exactly where digital I/Thou relations become possible. It is where our instruments of play calibrate us, and as I have

shown, play with technical images has the capacity to support dialogue by producing a virtual instantiation of embodiment.

Technical images and the digital exert control through black box operations. Their opaqueness is impenetrable, but since we cannot acquire x-ray vision, we may look closer at the qualities of the output. Technical images and the digital exert control by scrambling the already-hissy signal between oneself and an other. And yet, "the digital's restrictions are its affordances." (Evens 2024: 182) Flusser and Evens arrive at similar conclusions regarding technical images and the digital, respectively. Flusser saw technical apparatuses as creating universes unto themselves, e.g. the camera creates the photographic universe. The photographic universe is a space that follows a doctrine of game theory: there are a finite number of non-redundant photos that can be taken. (Flusser 2013: 26) Evens encourages us to "employ the digital as a challenge, take it where it does not fit." (Evens 2024: 211) He argues that the digital can only produce a "dampened contingency," (Evens 2024: 182) his example being a video game with a secret ending that can only be unlocked through seemingly arbitrary dialogue choices. However, Flusser proposes a clearer solution than Evens does, and that is what this paper has attempted to render schematizable: an image-game that harnesses the (restriction-born) affordances of digital communication to repair (and even augment) the capacity for dialogue in user-functionaries. If, as we see in Frederick Jameson's linking of schizophrenia and postmodernism via Chun, we are "unable to quilt together signifier with signified, and thus caught in ever swirling affects," (Chun 2008: 267) then we can play a resignification game to find our footing. We can subvert the machinic thinking that has been imposed upon our "interface to the quotidian" (Evens 2024: 176) by re-connoting (reprogramming) our shared images through a circuit-bent form of mediation.

Posing the digital against the actual as a matter of rules versus unruliness (a pun Evens uses to refer to the contingent character of the actual), Evens asserts that the "addition of another rule cannot imbue the digital with a contingency, but it does respond to the contingency of the actual." (Evens 2024: 209) Flusser points to improvisers' adherence to "precise rules (consensus) to jointly change them in the course of the playing." (Flusser 2011: 162) Evens is aware of what we have lost in the digital, but Flusser forecasted what there is to be gained in technical images. We have not yet taken the digital where it does not fit by jointly changing rulesets with our minds melded. Ariella Azoulay's interview of Aïm Deüelle Lüski on his modified cameras shows us what an anti-discursive mutation of an apparatus's ruleset looks like: photographs taken at the same time, from the same location, but in different cardinal directions and superimposed onto one another. (Azoulay 2010) A game of dialogical image synthesis would have a similar appearance (i.e. superimposition where fragments overlap), but

its ruleset makes it a cooperative game, a game of cybernetic communication. Instead of photographs that are *taken* at the same time, there would be accumulating pairs of lasso-cropped video loops that are *viewable* at the same time. And in place of distinct cardinal directions would be particular minds making particular selections.

Substitutions aside, what these programs share is a porousness, one that forces information to seep out from their process and incriminate the apparatus. Lüski's North-South-East-West Camera contains a program that forces its apparatuses to make statements, so that we, the amnesiac victim-investigators, can find out what happened to us in the unlit room that connects the real to its technical representation. In other words, what happened when we entered the black box and came out *seemingly* unscathed. The dialogically synthesized image game's program does this as well, and in doing so, puts us in touch with our fellow functionaries, since our interrogation is a combined effort. Once connected, we can jointly develop a technical imagination, one that allows us to finally conspire against the apparatus.

Works Cited

Aïm Deüelle Lüski Pinhole Cameras Philosophy & Photography by Ariella Azoulay. YouTube Video. January 14, 2011. Accessed November 6, 2024. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_-KuWbwGJuk.

Allado-McDowell, K. Human-Machine Literature: an interview with K Allado-McDowell. Interview by Lidia Zuin, December 5, 2021. https://lidiazuin.medium.com/human-machine-literature-an-interview-with-k-allado-mcdowell-46a8031a6e9f.

Allado-McDowell, K. "Meglanguages." In *Chimeras: Inventory of Synthetic Cognition*, 301–3, Onassis Foundation, 2022.

Allado-McDowell, K. *Pharmako-AI*. Cosmogenesis, 2020.

Azoulay, Ariella. "Aïm Deüelle Lüski Cameras For A Dark Time." *apertureArchive*. April 4, 2010. Accessed November 6, 2024. https://archive.aperture.org/article/2010/4/4/aim-deuelle-luski-cameras-for-a-dark-time.

Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." In *Illuminations*, 217–51. Schocken Books, 1986.

Baio, Cesar. "Functionary." In *Flusseriana: An Intellectual Toolbox*, edited by Siegfried Zielinski, Peter Weibel, and Daniel Irrgang, 185–86. Minneapolis, MN: Univocal Publishing, 2015.

Buber, Martin. *I and Thou*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2004.

Burroughs, William S. "The Cut-up Method." Accessed September 26, 2024. https://www.writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/88v/burroughs-cutup.html.

Chagas, Paulo. "Creativity with Apparatuses: From Chamber Music to Telematic Dialog." *Flusser Studies* 17 (2013).

Chun, Wendy Hui Kyong. *Control and Freedom: Power and Paranoia in the Age of Fiber Optics*. MIT Press, 2008.

Chun, Wendy Hui Kyong. *Programmed Visions: Software and Memory*. MIT Press, 2013.

Deleuze, Gilles. *Postscript on the Societies of Control*. Camas Books, 2018.

Evens, Aden. *The Digital and Its Discontents*. U of Minnesota Press, 2024.

Flusser, Vilém. *Into the Universe of Technical Images*. U of Minnesota Press, 2011.

Flusser, Vilém. *Post-History*. U of Minnesota Press, 2015.

Flusser, Vilém. *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*. Reaktion Books, 2013.

Galloway, Alexander R. *The Interface Effect*. John Wiley & Sons, 2013.

Galloway, Alexander R. *Uncomputable: Play and Politics In the Long Digital Age*. Verso Books, 2021.

Hayles, N. Katherine. *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*. University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Irrgang, Daniel, Aaron Jaffe, Paul Ardoin, Michael F. Miller, Rodrigo Martini, S. E. Gontarski, and Laci Mattison, eds. "Vilém Flusser in Open Circuits: The Dialogic Capacity of Video Images." In *Understanding Flusser, Understanding Modernism*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2023.

Jaffe, Aaron. *Spoiler Alert: A Critical Guide*. U of Minnesota Press, 2019.

Jaffe, Aaron, Paul Ardoin, Michael F. Miller, Rodrigo Martini, S. E. Gontarski, and Laci Mattison. *Understanding Flusser, Understanding Modernism*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2023.

Manouach, Ilan, and Anna Engelhardt. *Chimeras: Inventory of Synthetic Cognition*. Onassis Foundation, 2022.

Nony, Anaïs. "Technical Image: Opaque Apparatus of Programmed Significance." In *Understanding Flusser, Understanding Modernism*, 302–4. Bloomsbury Academic, 2023.

Paluska, Lena, and Rolf Kailuweit. "Discursive and/or dialogical? The Internet as a medium of the telematic society." VII International Congress on Communication and Culture - São Paulo, 2021.

Peters, Gary. "Improvisation and Time-Consciousness." In *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Improvisation Studies,* 1:439–57. Oxford University Press, 2016.

Pettman, Dominic. *Infinite Distraction*. John Wiley & Sons, 2016.

Rafman, Jon, director. *Punctured Sky*. Animation, Short, 2021.

Venturi, Riccardo. "Technical Images and Their Medium. How to Display Vilém Flusser's Thinking." Translated by Simon Pleasance. *Critique d'art. Actualité Internationale de La Littérature Critique Sur l'art Contemporain*, no. 46 (May 20, 2016). https://doi.org/10.4000/critiquedart.21167.

Wegerif, Rupert, and Louis Major. "Buber, Educational Technology, and the Expansion of Dialogic Space." *AI & SOCIETY* 34, no. 1 (March 2019): 109–19. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00146-018-0828-6.

Wiatr, Przemysław. "In Search of the Other – Vilém Flusser and Dialogical Life." *Flusser Studies* 27 (2019).

Zhang, Peter. "Flusser's Philosophy of Dialogue." April 2023. Accessed August 5, 2024. https://www.academia.edu/102004252/Flussers_Philosophy_of_Dialogue.