



CYBORG BODYMINDS TRANSCENDING HUMANISM

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Introduction

"By the late twentieth century, our time, a mythic time, we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; **in short, we are cyborgs.** The cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics. The cyborg is a condensed image of both imagination and material reality, the two joined centres structuring any possibility of historical transformation. In the traditions of 'Western' science and politics--the tradition of racist, male-dominant capitalism; the tradition of progress; the tradition of the appropriation of nature as resource for the productions of culture; the tradition of reproduction of the self from the reflections of the other - the relation between organism and machine has been a border war." - Donna Haraway

What "Cyborg Bodyminds" mean to us

Alice Wong: . . . I think about cyborg bodies as our attachment, our reliance on things outside of our organic meat sac that we're born with."

Jillian Weise: Alice Wong, I love the way you're talking about it in terms of electricity or a power outage, because that's sometimes how I will refute someone who's coming out of Haraway's, "We are all cyborgs." **The person, a tryborg, usually wants to claim that their phone is integral to their being and their ontology. However, if they didn't have a phone, they could still walk. They could still breathe. And so, for me, that's at the heart of it.** [chuckles] I also think that there's something to be said about cultural context. I think another critique I've heard is, well, **you're not really a cyborg because you can still exist without your leg. But I'm endangered as a disabled woman, or I feel endangered, if I don't have a leg that works for me. So, I think it's personal and subjective a lot of the time.** So, that's how I come to the term "cyborg."

Source: <https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com/2019/12/18/ep-66-cyborgs/>

From Mind-Body Dualism to a Cyborg Bodymind Politic

"Cyborg imagery can suggest a way out of the maze of dualisms in which we have explained our bodies and our tools to ourselves. This is a dream not of a common language, but of a powerful infidel heteroglossia. It is an imagination of a feminist speaking in tongues to strike fear into the circuits of the supersavers of the new right. **It means both building and destroying machines, identities, categories, relationships, space stories.** Though both are bound in the spiral dance, I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess."

Source: A Cyborg Manifesto (Donna Haraway)

Casting Liberatory Visions



In this activity, we will reflect on our own politic and explore possibilities for bodymind liberation. What does it mean for you to be a cyborg bodymind? What if you get to be free?

You have 5 minutes to "draw" what would your bodymind be like without oppression? How would you move? How would you be shaped?

Share Out!

Disabled Futures: Community

"The cyborg does not dream of community on the model of the organic family, this time without the oedipal project. **The cyborg would not recognize the Garden of Eden; it is not made of mud and cannot dream of returning to dust.** Perhaps that is why I want to see if cyborgs can subvert the apocalypse of returning to nuclear dust in the manic compulsion to name the Enemy. **Cyborgs are not reverent; they do not re-member the cosmos. They are wary of holism, but needy for connection-** they seem to have a natural feel for united front politics, but without the vanguard party. The main trouble with cyborgs, of course, is that they are the illegitimate offspring of militarism and patriarchal capitalism, not to mention state socialism. But illegitimate offspring are often exceedingly unfaithful to their origins. Their fathers, after all, are inessential."

Source: A Cyborg Manifesto (Donna Haraway)

Embodiment

“Crip bodies were built for space travel. Crip minds already push the outer limits. We already master usage of breathing apparatuses and can handle challenging situations.”

"A 2020 Wired article wrote about the buried history of disabled and Deaf people selected as some of the earliest astronaut trainees, because Deaf people were less likely to get nauseous and used sign to communicate; because pooping is a major problem in space and it's easier when you already have a colostomy bag...**Crip genius is what will keep us all alive and bring us home to the just and survivable future we all need.**"

Source: Twitter (Alice Wong); The Future is Disabled (Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha)

Immortality?

"Breonna's Garden is an Augmented Reality experience being created in collaboration with Ju'Niyah Palmer, Breonna Taylor's little sister. The intention of this project is to honor the life of Breonna Taylor while cultivating a safe space online to process complex emotions such as grief. Breonna's Garden is a sacred space for anyone who wants to share a message of hope for Breonna's family. Or, a message in remembrance of someone they miss."

Source: Breonna's Garden





In "Breakout Rooms," discuss with your partners:

How do you see yourself as a future ancestor?

How might we live on as cyborg bodyminds?

How are we already immortalized?

Breakout Rooms!

Share Out!

Resources



<https://bit.ly/cyborg-feedback>