

ONTOHACKERS: CONTESTING HYPERWORK IN THE ALGORICENE

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Hyperwork is the new condition of work in Big Data culture where increasingly autonomous algorithmic systems have a seamless capacity to capitalize almost any actual or potential future movement, action, affect or desire. The radical opacity and dynamism of hyperalgorithmic systems place crucial challenges of ontological significance to the most basic assumptions of consent, moral responsibility or traceability, as well as to basic assumptions of what work is.

The new modes of exploitation and control of workers in platforms such as Uber or Amazon as one aspect of hyperwork, but more generally the capitalization of affective of sex relations in Facebook or dating applications is another broader more invisible manifestation of hyperwork (concealing new modes of implicit sexwork and affective work).

Responses to this situation claiming remuneration for giving out our data to companies seems radical but eventually is insufficient, as it doesn't take into account the deeper implications of the process: the increasing reliance of life (actual and potential) on hypercontrol systems of radical capitalization.

Automation of work, (as defended for instance by accelerationists), is inseparable from this model of radical capitalization and control, in which autonomous algorithmic systems perform an ongoing modulation of digital ecologies in the attempt to preempt future behaviours, desires and interactions of individuals and societies, human and non human, at planetary scale and beyond. Such systems (which enact what Rouvroy (2012) calls an algorithmic governmentality exceeding neoliberalism) are increasingly based on autonomous learning algorithms whose radical opacity and dynamism may become unknowable even for their programmers.

The *Algoricene* is my proposal to understand questions elsewhere named under the term Anthropocene, by pointing at the millenia old emergence of algorithmic ecologies, that is, modes of organization of bodies, perceptions and movements following increasingly complex algorithmic geometries and choreographies: from the Hippodamian grid defining urban plans in Ancient Greece, through Renaissance perspective (which still underlies all screen based media today) to disciplinary society, we can trace static algorithms organising ecologies of increasing planetary dimension. Since the birth of Cybernetics, through Big Data Culture and towards so-called singularity we see a second phase of exponential acceleration of dynamic and increasingly autonomous algorithms, as a kind of algorithmic life form crossing a threshold of consistency. Hyperalgorithms are these increasingly autonomous, unknowable, dynamic, hyperconnected, emergent algorithmic and planetary scale computation systems to which every interfacial gesture is connected.

Since 1948 (publication of *Cybernetics* by Norbert Wiener and of the *Mathematical Theory of Information* by Claude Shannon) power focuses not only on modulating the actual, the known, but on capitalising, controlling and anticipating or preempting the potential, the yet unthinkable, the future unknown. This focus of algorithmic culture on not just measuring the known but reaching out to endless potentiality is a crucial ontological feature of hyperwork.

Another important aspect is the dissolution of both public and private space, both of which are inherited from previous (disciplinary) algorithmic regimes. This accounts for the intensified exploitation and modulation of any movement happening in the range of a sensor, where public and private sphere no longer count, rather sensor space and algorithmically legible space could be new categories, whereby its increasingly difficult to know where what sensors are sensing what, and even more impossible to know how whatever is being stored will eventually be processed now or in the future (an infinite and unknowable potential future of data processing and capitalization).

Automation, radical unknowability of processes, radical capitalization of movements, as features of hyperwork, and hyperwork as fundamental expression of hypercontrol, with hypersex and hyperaffect (Facebook or Grindr/Tinder interactions as modes of radical capitalisation) pose radical political, as well as ontological challenges: onto-political challenges that claim for an *ontological politics which I call ontohacking*.

Together with known strategies of opting out (which will be more and more difficult as sensing and algorithmic systems become pervasive and invisible), or development of policies and ontologies for ethics of algorithms, and other politics from older labour culture new strategies may be experimented with for resisting, contesting and exceeding hyperalgorithmic capture.

The [Metabody](#) project, and its subproject [Algoricene](#), looks at the crucial and underestimated kinetic-material nature of information systems in the attempt to understand the crucial role of reductive approaches to movement and embodiment as conditions of possibility of digital capture: alignment with interfaces that enforce a reduction of gesture's creative ambiguity to discrete calculable units, which increasingly erases and reduces the perceptual spectrum of our embodied interactions, is one crucial terrain for political experimentation that calls for an understanding of how media operate above all in terms not of content but (following Innis and McLuhan) of formatting perception and relations (metamedia).

Ontohacking is a politics of hacking the ontological force of media (metamedia) in crafting relational ratios. By analysing the reductive geometries of metamedia such as perspectival vision, and by reconsidering the moving body in its larger proprioceptive/alloceptive swarm of micropceptions, constantly reconfiguring across a transmodal sensory continuum, it's possible to challenge the very condition of possibility of digital capture, reintroducing in our ecologies a more indeterminate perceptual body (metabody) for a more indeterminate space ([metatopia](#)) in a process of ongoing opening up of metamedia and their perceptual ecologies (metaformance).

Note: an Ontohacking/metamedialab workshop can be offered expanding on the topic proposed in the paper <http://metabody.eu/metamedialab/> as well as a related performance/metaformance <http://metabody.eu/metatopia/>

Biography: Jaime del Val (Madrid 1974) is transdisciplinary media artist, philosopher, activist, promotor of the Metabody Project, Forum and Institute, and the non profit organisation Reverso. Jaime's projects propose redefinitions of embodiment, perception and public space that challenge contemporary control society as well as normative conceptions of affect, sex, gender and ability, and have been presented with over 100 performances and installations in over 50 cities of 25 countries. The recent evolution of these projects led to the Multiannual European Culture project with a 2 million euro fund from the EU commission, coordinated by Jaime with a network of 38 partners from 16 countries. As part of Metabody Jaime has organised over 20 international Forums and coordinated over 60 research projects. The project continues with the Metabody Forum, the Multiplicity University, the Metamedialab and the Metatopia environments. Jaime's philosophical work has been published in over 30 essays, and has been presented in over 100 lectures in Universities like U.C Berkeley, Stanford, MIT Medialab, Duke University, Yale, Cambridge and others. Two philosophical monographs by Jaime are forthcoming in 2018. Jaime has imparted over 60 artist's workshops in 25 countries. Furthermore as pianist and composer Jaime has recorded 12 CD's with over 300 works. Jaime's interests as activist have been elaborated since 1997 in relation to numerous environmental, lgbtq and Occupy movements, some of which Jaime has coordinated at national level. In 2008 Jaime was chosen by El Pais as one of the 100 Iberoamericans of the year, described as: "one of the most outstanding examples of an artist concerned with all art forms and with the problems of his time... a clear example of how it's possible to change the world through art".