



RE_VISIONING BODIES Edited by Daniel Neugebauer, with contributions
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Corporeal Literacy

In a scene not long after the beginning of *The Matrix*, we witness the protagonist Neo during his first combat training session. Laying back in what looks like an old-fashioned dentist chair, he is connected to a computer system by means of a plug in the back of his head. On a small computer screen in front of him, we see a schematic image of a body in kung fu poses, reminiscent of a “How to do Kung Fu” manual. Instead of learning kung fu from these images, he lays back with his eyes closed while things seem to be happening inside his body. For, although Neo is laying back in his chair, we are also given all kinds of signs that his body is very actively involved in something. Ten hours later, he opens his eyes and says: “I know kung fu.”¹

What does he know? How does he know it? What does it mean to *know* kung fu? To know kung fu, in this film, is to be able to move, respond, anticipate, and improvise in a kung fu-een manner. Neo is challenged to demonstrate his knowledge of kung fu in a friendly contest with his master Morpheus. The actual goal of him learning kung fu, however, goes beyond his ability to meet his master’s challenge. Kung fu is presented as a tool to make him think differently. Not by explaining or showing him that things are different than previously thought, but by changing his way of responding to what he encounters. Through kung fu, Neo learns to move anew, and this is shown to transform his modes of enacting perception as well. Through these new ways of moving, Neo learns to engage with what he encounters in new ways, and even to think in new ways—he develops a new literacy.

Although literacy is traditionally associated with language and books, the use of the term is no longer limited to this context. Over the past decades, various other literacies have been proposed, expanding the notion of literacy beyond the domain of the written and printed word. Literacy is used to describe the skills involved in interpreting various information, as in visual literacy, media literacy, or aural literacy. Likewise, corporeal literacy aims to expand the notion of literacy but in a slightly different way. Unlike the “media” in media literacy, “corporeal” in corporeal literacy does not denote a class of information or an aspect of objects being read but rather refers to the

1 Lana and Lilli Wachowski, *The Matrix*. Hollywood, CA: Warner Bros. et al., 1999.

corporeal dimensions of perception and sense making and to how these corporeal dimensions are informed by practices of doing, by the affordances of tools and technologies, by the environments with which humans engage, as well as by habits and practices they have incorporated. This emphasis on the corporeal dimensions of perception distinguishes corporeal literacy from *corpoliteracy*—proposed by Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung in Volume 3 of this series, *Counter_Readings of the Body*—although the term likewise acknowledges the body as a site and “a medium of learning, a structure or organ that acquires, stores, and disseminates knowledge.”² Going further, corporeal literacy as a conceptual tool sheds light on how the sedimented effects of bodily practices co-shape the human mind and the ways in which we perceive and make sense. Mind here does not refer to something existing separately from the body. Rather, what we conceive of as “mind” emerges from the interaction of our bodies with the world we encounter—including as part of our coevolution with technology—that is, the bodymind.

Literacy, Technology, and the Mind

This understanding of corporeal literacy builds on and moves beyond Walter Ong’s conceptualization of literacy as the cultural condition or “mind-set” that has resulted from the widespread use of the technologies of writing and print.³ More than providing human users with a means to capture, store, and transmit spoken language, these technologies, Ong argues, quite literally changed people’s mind-sets. Ong locates these transformations in the way writing and print turn language from an aural-transitory phenomenon into a visual-spatial one, which affords new ways of handling language and relating to it. Importantly, Ong’s account of the impact of the invention of writing and print technology is not concerned solely with what the use of language does per se. It is not about what words do to the mind, but

2 Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung, “CORPOLITERACY,” in Daniel Neugebauer (ed.), *The New Alphabet, Volume 3: Counter_Readings of the Body*. Leipzig: Specter Books, 2021, p. 22. First published in: Sepake Angiama, Clare Butcher, Alkisti Efthymiou, Anton Kats, Arnisa Zequo (eds), *aneducation – documenta 14*. Berlin: Archive Books, 2019, pp. 114–21.

3 Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. London: Routledge, 1988.

about the transformations in modes of managing knowledge, of thinking, and of being which are brought about by extensive interaction with the medium of writing and print.

Once written down, words gain an existence independent from the situation of utterance, can circulate independently, accumulate in libraries, be categorized, cut into smaller pieces, analyzed in new ways, and accessed time and again at different places and times. Writing and print thus support "a sense of closure, a sense that what is found in a text has been finalized, has reached a state of completion," creating the new modes of imagining and thinking that Ong proposes as "the mind-set of literacy."⁴ Such closure pertains not only to the writing itself but also to the possibility that knowledge can be definitive, exhaustive, and all-encompassing, as well as an understanding of knowledge as something that can be placed somewhere and ordered. Writing and print partake in a "spatialization" of knowledge that is also manifested in taxonomies, indexes, charts, and maps: all modes of knowing that seek to determine the position of individual elements in a totality. Such knowledge places the knowing entity in a position of overview, at a distance from and outside a spatially ordered objective system.

Many have reflected on this supposed objectivity, drawing connections between the silent and individual practice of reading and the emergence of the modern Western subject, characterized by a sense of disconnection between the private interior mind (doing the reading and the thinking) and the public exterior body. That is, reading written or printed language facilitates particular modes of attentiveness and supports a sense of self or "I" as first and foremost located in the mind. Such a disembodied "I" can never truly be attained however, because, as Brian Rotman—in his *Becoming Beside Ourselves: The Alphabet, Ghosts, and Distributed Human Being*—shows:

"[B]efore disembodied agencies come embodied ones. Alphabetic writing, like all technological systems and apparatuses, operates according to what might be called a corporeal axiomatic: it engages directly and inescapably with the bodies of its users. It makes demands and has corporeal effects."⁵

⁴ Ibid., p. 129.

⁵ Brian Rotman, *Becoming Beside Ourselves: The Alphabet, Ghosts, and Distributed Human Being*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008, p. 15.

Although Ong observes the shift from the aural of speech towards the visibility of language to be key to the emergence of the “mind-set” that is literacy, he does not reflect on the embodied implications of this shift more than observing that, as an aural phenomenon, language has no permanent existence—since, as he explains, sound disappears while being uttered—while as visual phenomenon it has longevity. That is, Ong points to how writing changes the way in which language is present for perception, yet he does not reflect on what writing does to perception and to bodies engaged in perceiving.

Writing proceeds by means of a symbolic notation of the sounds of speech through visual signs. This symbolic notation requires from the reader the capacity to read the letters in terms of the sounds they stand for, as a result of which successions of letters become recognizable as words. Understanding how to read written language requires learning to read what is seen in terms of these sounds. The difference between speech and writing, therefore, is not (or not only) that writing turns spoken language into a visual phenomenon, but also that speech (either live or recorded) requires us to make sense of what we hear, whereas written language requires us to make sense of what we see in terms of sound. Writing thus alerts us to perception as a bodily grasping that involves our senses, or, as James Gibson puts it, as perceptual systems through which we make sense of what we encounter.⁶ This therefore changed the embodied hierarchy of the senses when it came to perception.

Writing and print also operate on the bodies of their users through the practices they afford, the routines, patterns of movement, and gestures involved in using them, and through the perceptual activities that are mobilized by the medium or that are part of the background conditions that brought the medium about. Technologies like writing and print impose what Rotman describes as their “mediological needs” on the bodyminds of their users. They facilitate behavior and engage their users in patterns of action and/in perception, the effects of which extend beyond any technologies’ explicit functioning and beyond the evident perceptual and cognitive skills required to use them.⁷ The logic of these effects, Rotman observes, is

⁶ James J. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1979.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

not one of representation but of enactment: of how media engage bodies of users in patterns of action and perception, of how they propagate some behaviors and suppress others.

The fact that most humans are capable of engaging with language as a visual-spatial phenomenon is a matter of capacities given in the structure of human embodiment to see writing and produce it. In this sense, the invention of the technology of writing and print meets with the pre-existing potential of bodies. The same might be argued about more recent technologies. The control mechanisms of a smartphone, for example, are designed to meet the potential of bodies to perform certain movements. Humans able to perform these movements are therefore capable of using these technologies. However, in using these movements to interact with the touch screens of devices, the movement skills to engage with these technologies become part of something they were not before. They become part of navigating through information, finding the right piece of music, scrolling through lists of data, communicating with friends and strangers, and organizing and making connections between diverse materials. As a result, the skills involved in performing these movements become part of how bodies make connections, how they relate to what they encounter, and how they make sense of it. These new technologies now mediate in the handling of information and, by extension, hold the potential to change modes of understanding and thinking, including our understanding of what knowledge is and what it means to know.

Literacy thus understood describes a situated condition that results from how, once incorporated, those skills acquired from the use of writing and print affect modes of understanding, not only of language but also of other things: of the world, of human "selves." Similarly, corporeal literacy is not about how language affects bodies or how bodies are involved in how we make sense of language. It is about what the medium of writing and print, as well as other technologies, do to bodies and vice versa. How do technologies afford modes of engaging with knowledge that respond to the bodies' potential for perception and understanding? At the same time, how do technologies mediate the development of new cognitive perceptual skills and, by extension, new modes of thinking and imagining?

The Mind, the Body, and the World

Insights in corporeal literacy also find parallels in current developments in enactive cognition. From an enactive-cognition perspective, perception and understanding are grounded in bodily practices that contribute to the building of sensorimotor schemata or skills in interaction with the environment. These skills or schemata provide an answer to what Alain Berthoz describes as the fundamental problem of perception—unity.⁸ Human bodies have a great number of sensors through which they are capable of receiving stimuli. Sensory inputs are therefore multiple, manifold, ambiguous, staggered over time, they do not cover the same range of velocities, and they are often fuzzy and incomplete. And so, as Berthoz writes, “Perception is an interpretation; its coherence is a construction whose rules depend on endogenous factors and on the actions that we plan.”⁹ According to enactive approaches, sensorimotor schemata (Berthoz) or sensorimotor skills (Noë) are crucial to creating this unity, acting as blueprints for possible action and organizing perception even before sensory stimuli are processed. These schemata, Berthoz points out, are not sets of data but organizing frameworks for understanding relationships between action, perception, and memory. They are part of how bodies engage with what they encounter, and they presuppose certain capacities given in the structure of our embodiment. For example, the possibility for humans to develop the ability to walk up and down stairs requires particular physical possibilities. Once they have learned to do so, this embodied knowledge will be incorporated into a wider schema that includes memory, particular physical strengths, the interpretation of visual stimuli, an implicit understanding of the workings of gravity, and so on.

Referring to these capacities as sensorimotor skills (rather than sensorimotor schemata), Alva Noë highlights the fact that these capacities are not merely given but have to be acquired in and through experience.¹⁰ Neo’s kung fu training illustrates his observation that “*What we perceive* is determined by *what we do* (or what we know how

⁸ Alain Berthoz, *The Brain’s Sense of Movement*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000, p. 90.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

¹⁰ Alva Noë, *Action in Perception*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004.

to do); it is determined by what we are *ready* to do.”¹¹ Perception, Noë points out, is not an activity in the brain but a skillful activity on the part of the animal as a whole. And the basis of perception is implicit practical knowledge of the ways movement gives rise to changes in sensory stimulation. For example, reading requires the implicit knowledge that movement of the eyes to the right produces leftward movement across the visual field. Eating requires the implicit knowledge that, when looking at one side of, say, a tomato, what is in front of us is a whole tomato; what we see is the presence of a three-dimensional object in space. Even in the dark, or with our eyes closed, we can touch different sides of a box and not only feel a succession of surfaces but grasp their spatial relationships as different sides of the same box. Such a perceptual sense of presence results from our practical grasp of sensorimotor patterns that mediate our presence in relation to what we are perceiving. Perceiving is not merely to have sensory impressions but rather to *make sense of* sensory impressions, and this happens through our sensorimotor skills. This understanding is not only constitutive of our experience of the world, but also is the root of our ability to think about it.

This makes Noë's theory of enactive cognition particularly interesting for a non-representational understanding of literacy as a corporeal condition. His approach suggests that bodily practices and ways of interacting with technologies and the environment may affect the ways in which sensorimotor skills come about and thus co-shape the ways in which human beings perceive and order information. Enactive cognition approaches like Noë's therefore also call into question the assumption that perception and cognition “consist of the representation of a world that is independent of our perceptual and cognitive capacities by a cognitive system that exists independent of the world” and instead propose a view of perception and cognition as embodied action.¹²

This concept is explored imaginatively in *The Matrix*, where humans receive electrical stimuli via the plug in the top of their spinal column, which are interpreted by their bodies and from which the world of the matrix emerges as a world with a visible, audible,

¹¹ Ibid., p. 1 (italics in the original).

¹² Francisco J. Varela et al., *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992, p. xx.

tangible existence, a world in which they can participate through what they perceive as fully embodied interaction. In *The Matrix*, this world is opposed to a world that is material and that—like Plato's "real world" outside the famous allegorical cave—exists elsewhere, known only by some enlightened beings and in constant threat of being destroyed by the same machines that produce the illusory world that most humans are caught within.¹³ The narrative of the movie thus reiterates a well-known binary opposition between the digital and the material: that technology provides mere illusions, which prevent us from direct engagement with the more real, material world. Interestingly, however, the last human venue in *The Matrix* is not projected outside but inside a cave, somewhere deep down below the surface of the Earth. Outside is the "desert of the real," a post-apocalyptic world destroyed by machines that have outsmarted human beings and now keep humans locked in the technological surroundings that produce the illusory world. On either side, humans find themselves locked within.

A central theme in both Plato's allegory and *The Matrix* are the limitations to knowledge and how these limitations keep humans imprisoned. Whereas Plato's allegory suggests that the way to liberation is to be found in leaving the body behind, in *The Matrix*, it is through his body, and in particular through movement, that Neo learns to understand his world anew, including the world that is produced by the technology referred to as the matrix. The way to liberation is imagined here as an embodied understanding of the rules that govern his world and also how "some of these rules can be bent, others can be broken" (as stated by the character Morpheus). In *The Matrix*, enlightenment does not happen to the Cartesian "I think" to whom the world is a spectacle, but to Merleau-Ponty's "I can" to whom the world is given as a system of possibilities and as potential for

¹³ The allegory of the cave is introduced in the seventh book of Plato's *The Republic*. The allegory describes a group of people who have lived their entire life in a cave. Chained to one wall, they watch shadows projected on a blank wall in front of them, generated by objects passing in front of the light from a fire which is behind them concealed by a low wall. They take these shadows for reality. The allegory compares philosophers to prisoners who, once freed from the cave, come to understand that the shadows on the wall are actually not reality at all.

action.¹⁴ Furthermore, *The Matrix* suggests that, approached in this way, technology does not limit but actually expands our potential for action, and through this, also our potential for imagining and thinking.

Crucial to Neo and his fellow freedom fighters is their development beyond being either locked within the technically produced world or within their real-world cave, instead learning to move between the two. In doing so, we might say that they learn to engage with their world in terms of what Mark Hansen (after Monika Fleischmann and Wolfgang Strauss) refers to as "mixed reality."¹⁵ Mixed reality describes a situation in which the virtual is no longer conceived of as a separate realm, distinct from the real, but a dimension of reality opened up by technology. Or, as Hansen puts it:

"Rather than conceiving the virtual as a total technical simulacrum and as the opening of a fully immersive, self-contained fantasy world, the mixed reality paradigm treats it as simply one more realm among others that can be accessed through embodied perception or enaction."¹⁶

In the mixed reality paradigm, virtuality emerges from the various ways in which our interaction with technology expands our reality and affects human behavior. This leads Hansen to his observation that mixed reality turns an ontological condition—in this case, that our reality has been expanded by technology since the very first use of tools—into an empirical reality. Mixed reality, he observes, "appears from the moment that tools first delocalized and distributed human sensation, notably touch and vision."¹⁷ Today's virtual reality technologies expose this technical conditioning of experience and foreground

14 The Cartesian "I think" refers to René Descartes' famous saying "I think therefore I am." With this, Descartes identifies being with thinking, and the mind as the site of self or "I." In his *Phenomenology of Perception* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1962), Maurice Merleau-Ponty argues against this Cartesian understanding. Replacing "I think" with "I can," he draws attention to the ways in which being and thinking are grounded in the body and its capacity for action.

15 Mark B. N. Hansen, *Bodies in Code: Interfaces with Digital Media*. London: Routledge, 2006, p. 2.

16 Ibid., p. 5.

17 Ibid., p. 9.

what Hansen describes as “the constitutive or ontological role of the body in giving birth to the world.”¹⁸ This bodily basis of experience “has *always* been conditioned by a technical dimension and has *always* occurred as a cofunctioning of embodiment with technics.”¹⁹

Hansen’s observations point to how human modes of perceiving, experiencing, acting, and thinking are thoroughly intertwined with the technologies we use. Technologies—like our computers or the above-mentioned smartphones—are not merely technical extensions, we actually perceive and think through them. This is what leads Andy Clark to his assertion that human beings are natural-born cyborgs.²⁰ Bernard Stiegler, Katherine Hayles, and Hansen refer to this as *technogenesis*: the human coevolution with technology.²¹ The proposition recurring in their works is that humans—and what we associate with the human mind and thinking—coevolved with the tools humans developed and deployed. This is supported by research in radically different fields, namely palaeoanthropology and evolutionary neurology.

Long before it was possible to imagine the kind of intimate intertwining of humans and technology envisaged in *The Matrix*, humans have been “natural born cyborgs” in the sense that their modes of encountering the world took place in interaction with technologies of various kinds. Terrence Deacon observes that:

“Stone and symbolic tools, which were initially acquired with the aid of flexible ape-learning abilities, ultimately turned

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 8–9.

²⁰ Andy Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs: Minds, Technology, and the Future of Human Intelligence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

²¹ Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*, trans. Richard Beardsworth and George Collins. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998; Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time 2: Disorientation*, trans. Stephen Barker. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009; Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time 3: Cinematic Time and the Question of Malaise*, trans. Stephen Barker. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011; Katherine N. Hayles, *How We Think: Digital Media and Contemporary Technogenesis*. Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2012; Mark B. N. Hansen, *Embodying Technesis: Technology Beyond Writing*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2003; Hansen, *Bodies in Code*.

the tables on their users and forced them to adapt to a new niche opened by these technologies. Rather than being just useful tricks, these behavioural prosthesis for obtaining food and organizing social behaviours became indispensable elements in a new adaptive complex. The origin of "humanness" can be defined as that point in our evolution where these tools became the principal source of selection on our bodies and brains."²²

To paraphrase Noë, interactions with technology changed *what we do*, what we *know how to do*, and what we *are ready to do*, and in doing so also transformed modes of perceiving and thinking. Referring to Clark, Rotman observes that the human:

"[...] has from the beginning of the species been a three-way hybrid, a bio-cultural-technological amalgam: the 'human mind' — its subjectivities, affects, agency, and forms of consciousness — having been put into form by a succession of physical and cognitive technologies at its disposal."²³

Whereas Ong's argument is constructed around an opposition of orality and literacy, in which orality problematically seems to stand for a more natural, pristine, and primitive condition and literacy for culture and progression, Rotman points out that what writing and print do to human bodyminds actually builds on and extends previous cognitive perceptual practices resulting from the invention of speech. Furthermore, as he and many others have pointed out, writing is not the only medium that imposes "mediological needs" on bodies—so too do other technologies, environments, and bodily practices. From this perspective, what Ong describes as the mind-set of literacy represents only one particular aspect of a much longer, complicated, and diverse history in which writing and print are part of a broad array of physical and cognitive technologies that have shaped, and are shaping, human bodyminds. For just two examples amongst many works in which this

²² Terrence Deacon, *The Symbolic Species: The Co-evolution of Language and the Brain*. New York: Norton, 1997, p. 345, quoted from Rotman, *Becoming Beside Ourselves*, pp. xix-xx.

²³ Rotman, *Becoming Beside Ourselves*, p. 1.

more complex picture has been explored, Friedrich Kittler has shown how the gramophone, film, and the typewriter have become part of how we think;²⁴ Gilles Deleuze famously argued that cinema has transformed modes of thinking and imagining in modernity, and explains this through how montage and the film camera place new kinds of demands on our sensorimotor schemata.²⁵

Going further in terms of situating these theories in particular times and places, in his *Techniques of the Observer*, cultural theorist Jonathan Crary shows how technologies like the camera obscura and the stereoscope can be considered paradigmatic for culturally specific modes of perceiving and thinking and for culturally specific conceptions of perception and embodiment.²⁶ In his subsequent book, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture*, Crary demonstrates that such modes of perceiving are not merely the result of actual encounters and interactions with specific technologies, but that these interactions with technologies get incorporated and thus transform ways of perceiving and understanding.²⁷ Like Ong's, the work of these theorists points to how technologies affect ways of perceiving, imagining, and thinking, and they show that the ways in which they do so are not only a matter of our actual interaction with them but extend well beyond that to become part of naturalized—yet culturally and historically situated—modes of understanding.

Conclusions

The Matrix is, of course, fiction. In fact, *The Matrix* is interesting precisely as science fiction, that is, as an extrapolation from the 1999 state-of-the art in science and technology: an informed fantasy of where we might go in the future. Although it seems unlikely that the

²⁴ Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, trans. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999.

²⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema I: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam. Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota University Press, 1986.

²⁶ Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990.

²⁷ Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999.

next generation of "How to" manuals will be delivered via a brain plug, first steps have already been taken in the development of brain-computer interfaces. Research into neural plasticity has demonstrated that it is possible to reorganize brain functions and make the brain interpret electrical impulses detected through the tongue as visual images, or impulses from an implant in the inner ear as sound. Such research points to the possibility of humans participating in an environment in which visibility and audibility do not necessarily precede perception but emerge from their embodied response to these impulses. This would result in further changes to the capabilities, hierarchies, and technologies that constitute and change the way humans perceive the world, much like the changes brought about by Neo's kung fu training.

At the time of his writing in the early 1980s, Ong observed that telephone, radio, television, and various kinds of sound recording began to alter the mind-set brought about by writing and print. He suggests that these technologies have the potential to bring about a "secondary orality." His choice to describe this new phase as a "secondary *orality*" (rather than further developments of literacy) seems to be inspired by the then-rising prominence of media that capture and transmit spoken rather than written language. The suggestion that this would mean a return to orality, however, is a denial of the difference between speech and speech-that-is-mediated. It is a denial therefore precisely of mediation: of how sound recording, radio, and television are also means of what the subtitle of his book describes as "technologizing the word," albeit in different ways. Both writing and recording evoke a disconnection of the utterance from a speaker and the situation of speaking, and require from a listener the capacity to relate to language thus disconnected. Both give language a semi-permanent existence, as something that can be stored, ordered, catalogued, and accessed time and again and in different places and times. Both afford language the ability to be dissected into smaller pieces, to be analyzed and recombined. That is, both provide many of the developments that Ong considers as constitutive of the mind-set that is literacy.

This demonstrates that bodies can reorganize how the various sense modalities are encountered as visible and audible, and both at the same time. Such reorganizations are indicative of transformations in how bodies are corporeally literate. But, just as the technology

of writing and print did not mean the end of speech, so the emergence of other technologies does not mean that writing will be replaced by them, nor that the effect of older technologies on ways of perceiving and thinking is simply undone. Rather, the ways in which bodies are corporeally literate bears the traces of histories of engagement with various technologies and environments as well as with other bodily practices like training and habits. How bodies are corporeally literate is in constant transformation and involves both the sediments of widespread uses of technologies and other practices of doing and imagining; they are part of how individuals are culturally and historically situated and the effects of their individual trajectories and choices. Corporeal literacy as a conceptual tool thus directs attention to these sediments and how they inform ways of perceiving and making sense, and how what we experience as our perceptions, our ways of understanding, are jointly shaped by histories of intra-actions of human bodies and the demands placed on them by the worlds they encounter.