

A Cyborg's Testimonial: Mourning *Blade Runner's* Cryptic Images

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I've seen things you people wouldn't believe. Attack ships on fire off the shoulder of Orion. I watched c-beams glitter in the dark near the Tanhauser Gate. All those... moments will be lost... in time. Like... tears... in rain. Time... to die.

—Roy Batty in *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, 1982)

With these lines Roy testifies to his memories and to his death, a death that has, in a sense, already taken place, and one that is, by definition, prohibited. While one cannot experience one's own death, death is not strictly a limit on the 'other side'; it comes to us from the grave, haunting our lives here and now. If there is a being-towards-death, there is a death-towards-being, and in this interminable aporia, Roy, the 'replicant', testifies to Deckard, the 'human' – who might himself be a replicant. Roy gives his memories, and does not ask for return. He gives, he dies. And he has become immortal, 'tears in rain' having become the film's signature to which the (potential) fans continue to countersign, attesting to Roy's testimony. Between the signature and countersignature there is a resonance and an affiliation, to the point, as paradoxical as this may seem, where it cannot be properly distinguished which came first. Did Roy's (and the film's) signature call for its countersignature, or did Roy and the film 'follow' the (potential) fans? Frankly, there is no 'first' here. This is not a sequential history. This is a story about 'humanity'–technology.

The hyphen, of course, marks both union and separation, a disjunctive link – a (non)relation.¹ In 'the West', the tendency is to follow Aristotle's lead in seeing technology as mere tool, in which we, as individuals, are in full control. As tool, however, it must be detached from us in order to be manipulated, but, as detached, it must thus be out of our hands and so *beyond* our control. Hence all the narratives of Apocalypse, mad scientists, and aliens advising us to temper our technologies, to use them 'wisely'. To remain in control, that is, until the next narrative – in that vicious spiral known as liberal instrumentality. The (once... again) bounded self, always (already) unraveling, interminably finding itself haunted, spaced out, opened up... to the other (within).

While it is certain that the importance of the technical in the constitution of the 'human' has been repressed or foreclosed², it is also true that, at some level, the technical and the human remain irreducible to each other. This situation is addressed in *Blade Runner*, where, in displaying more *pathos* to their situation, the replicants have become 'more human than human', leading to the question: just what is this 'human' that the technical contaminates yet to which it remains irreducible? In this logic of the hyphen, how do we mark the difference?

In our–Roy's–testimony.

Over the years, of course, *Blade Runner* has been the object of intense scrutiny, and adoration.³ What we offer in this contribution is nothing more, and nothing less, than the potentiality of marking the human.

¹ The hyphen in this journal's name might be noted, the mutual contamination and elucidation of film by philosophy, and philosophy by film.

² Jacques Derrida notes that the Ancient Greek *pharmakon*, which can be translated in many, often contradictory ways (as remedy, poison, gift, artificial, scapegoat), is divided against itself in the founding move of Western philosophy so as to be seen as beneficial in regards to speech but harmful in reference to writing, remedy in regards to living memory but poison when referencing technical recordings or memory aids (1981). Writing, the supplement and the 'scapegoat', must be excluded, and so it goes, continually, in this perpetual exorcism of the ghosts. It is no accident that *tekne*, which in Greek means *both art and technique*, is most often translated from the Greek as *art* when the subject is *logos*, and (the 'merely') *technical* when the object is writing. And yet it remains the case that the *pharmakon* can only be understood *through logos*. *Logos* is, then, contaminated by what it in vain tries to exclude; ambiguity, and the technical, will continue to haunt every speech, and every testimony.

³ A consensus position has largely developed out of a single essay, Giuliana Bruno's "Ramble City: Postmodernism and *Blade Runner*" (1990). In applying Fredric Jameson's thoughts on the "cultural logic of late capitalism" (1991), Bruno argued that the film could be seen as a metaphor of the postmodern condition, or our – "our" insofar as we are postmodern subjects, or subject to postmodernism – schizophrenic relation to the Symbolic order. She suggests that while the replicants were initially "resistant" to the "social order", in order to survive "the signifiers of their existence had to be put in order" (190). This resulted in an "itinerary" that she unequivocally

'Mourning the Impossibility of Mourning'

Technically speaking, the replicants of *Blade Runner* are not cyborgs, but androids; they are not *cybernetic organisms*, but ones that are genetically engineered.⁴ Given the discourses of the cyborg (and all their wonderful signatures and countersignatures), however, I will call them such, for in all practical purposes cyborgs and androids fulfill here the same role, as exteriorizations of and hauntings from what has been foreclosed and encrypted: our contamination by technology, and our others within. In fact, the cyborg (or replicant or android) is a perfect exteriorization, *where technology is other and the other is technology*.

The crypt, a concept which haunts the works of Jacques Derrida (and many others besides), is a (non)place within the self that forms through a refusal of mourning. That is, the conditions of possibility of mourning, that some space within the self be opened so as to mourn some other, are, if taken to the limit, the very conditions of *impossibility* of mourning, in that a 'full' mourning would require a 'complete' space within the self to be opened – but then there would be no 'self' left to receive it. What is mourned or 'introjected' becomes part of the self (though one opened to the other), and what is not is incorporated into the self in the (non)place of the crypt, which, as Jody Castricano suggests in her exploration of it, is the 'vault of desire', a sort of 'condemned passageway' inside the self that returns to haunt and displace, well, *the self* (2001, 9). The crypt follows the logic of *foreclosure*, as opposed to the *repression* of the unconscious. What is not mourned goes unrecognized, foreclosed, 'existing' only in its incorporation. It exists, it lives, as the incorporated dead.

Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok argue that melancholia is a negative situation, and incorporation a pathology that should, with proper treatment, be displaced in favour of mourning (1994, 129). However, incorporation is necessary for the very subject to arise,

describes as "an Oedipal journey" (Ibid.). This path of analysis is followed very closely by David Harvey (1990) and Kaja Silverman (1991), among others. I will argue the film's aporias work to confuse this narrative.

⁴ It may be some time before we are all cyborgs in the sense of having technological implants inside our bodies, but since our bodies have been technologically altered from our first vaccination, *we are all (always) already androids, or replicants... Or are we?* The question must remain suspended, for it is the very suspension, and all the testimonies that ensue from such suspension, that mark the very difference between the human and the technical. We could say "yes, we are replicants, and no longer human", but this would not dissolve the difference between the 'human', as the act of testimony, and the technical. Instead of humans–technology, the terms would simply shift to replicants–technology. We would, again, have to testify.

and is, then, 'always already'. One should admit the other always already inscribed at the heart of oneself, the impossibility of one-self. One mourns in the very process of doing so, but as one would be acknowledging the always-alreadyness of incorporation, such mourning would really be something like 'mourning the impossibility of mourning', mourning the fact that one cannot fully mourn. If the birth of the symbolic order lies in its ability to 'kill' death by giving it a name in the funeral rite, then the symbolic itself emerges through 'mourning the impossibility of mourning', for in killing death one acknowledges that one is attempting the impossible: to give death meaning. At the origin of the symbolic order, of 'humanity', is the *aporia* that guides all others, a mad moment where it is impossible to distinguish introjection from incorporation. One can only decide, testify. *The (ever iterated) origin of the symbolic is testimony.*

'Mourning the impossibility of mourning' admits that technology cannot be (fully) appropriated; the only thing possible is the *movement* of appropriation, the double bind movement of appropriation which must necessarily stop at the point of final appropriation, for the precise reason that a full appropriation would eliminate the receiving self. This is the same *aporia* as mourning. 'Exappropriation' is this movement that recognizes the impossibility of final appropriation, but one that confronts this very impossibility and with it enters into an interminable negotiation (Derrida 2002). 'Our' culture, in viewing technology as a tool, forgets that we too are forever changing, often *through* technology. When this sort of claim is made, charges of 'technological determinism' are never far behind, but theories of technological determinism are just the inverse of viewing technology as a tool: here the tool simply takes over its maker. Though perhaps a bit harder to imagine insofar as it dwells in *aporia*, it may make more sense to view the relation between 'humans' and 'technology' as a (non)relation, a relation of disjunction. They contaminate one another, even if, nonetheless, they remain irreducible. The difference is the ability to *give* testimony.

The Aporias of Testimony

Testimony requires an *instant* in which to take place; you must give it in the present, and *be* self-present. One cannot substitute a technical copy, like a videotape, in its place: this is part of testimony's law. As an example, one may witness the infamous Rodney King trial, where the videotape, seemingly so obvious in its depiction of the brutality of the LAPD

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officers, had to be 'explained' by 'experts'. At the same time, however, another of testimony's structural determinants insists that if the testimony is to be true, it must be repeatable: what you say is true today must remain so tomorrow. In its repetition, its archivization, it is thus always already technical: the *instant* of the testimony becomes and is already *exemplary*. This (dis)junction between one's singular testimony and its repetition is the first aporia of testimony.

If testimony is always already contaminated by the technical, it is also haunted by fiction. Obviously, what you testify must be what you believe to be true, yet it is nonetheless the case that it cannot be *the* truth, for that would imply testimony were nothing more than mere proof, evidence. At its limit testimony must be, rather, an appeal to an act of faith *beyond* any proof, and so here testimony and fiction find common ground. Testimony must allow itself to be haunted by fiction, to be 'parasitized' by what it must nonetheless (try to) exclude. As with testimony and the technical, the conditions of possibility of testimony (that it remain separate from fiction) are its very conditions of impossibility (in that it would become mere proof) – yet testimony takes place regardless, or, rather, in full regard. This is testimony's second aporia.

To take place, testimony must be given. The logic of the *gift* occupies a similar aporia to that of mourning and appropriation. For a gift to be a gift, it must not be recognized *as such*. That is, the conditions of possibility of a gift, that *someone* give some *thing* to some *other*, are at the same time the conditions of *impossibility* of the gift, in that in recognizing the gift *as such* one places it into the logic of calculation and exchange. It is inevitable that the gift will be, or was always already, part of a calculative order – yet it is imperative to think its relation of foreign-ness to this order, to the fact that to be a gift in the first place it must remain somehow to its outside. The gift-as-gift, then, must be in some sense forgotten to remain a gift. The thinker of the gift, like Derrida, must think the gift's forgetting, its irreducibility to order (1992).

While this confused situation might seem to threaten immobility in the midst of so many aporias, it is only through and via such aporias that movement *becomes* possible. If, at the 'origin' of the symbolic, a definite meaning could have been given to death, would the symbolic have even emerged? The question is stupefying. One *must* decide on the undecidable; how, Derrida elsewhere notes, could one decide on the decidable? Of course, this question might begin to be answered by examining our technocratic societies

with their leaders who are little more than conduits for channeling information garnered (and/or manufactured) by polls, where the future is annexed into the present, feeding (the dream of) stasis – and reelection. In this frenzy, a vicious circle ensues: as the technocrat anticipates the future in the hopes of being better able to manage it thus, the future becomes increasingly impossible to imagine outside of graphs, flow charts and prediction markets. There comes to be ‘no future’, as the pre-cyber punk Johnny Rotten wailed over two decades ago, only a ceaseless present which continues to insist on itself and its ability to manage... everything. Naturally many get a bit anxious in the face of a future that, in its graphed and numbered visibility, has gone *invisible*, (henceforth) deathly feared. Escape from this condition through (often Raptural) transcendence becomes desired, or, should that be blocked, Apocalypse – and it is precisely this that we should resist in the name of the irresolvable aporia, one that, in its irresolution, *gives* one to movement, to decide on and in the *undecidables*. What the technocrats deny is nothing if not testimony.

When, in exorcising its less assured etymon of ‘knowledge’, modern science lays a claim to Truth, and, in casting off its earlier intonations of ‘*tekne*’ (and thus ‘art’), technology plays a subordinate role as *applied* science, a kind of knowing and revealing of the world is replaced by force and manipulation. In Heidegger’s language, a ‘bringing-forth’ morphs into a ‘challenging-forth’. The latter Heidegger calls ‘Enframing’, in which we put the natural world (and ourselves) into controllable boxes, revealing the world solely through and as ‘standing reserve’, or stock (1977, 17). In more Foucauldian terms, we confine the outside and partition it off, believing ourselves in full mastery all the while – that is, full and final appropriation. This is the domain of liberal instrumentality that reduces technology to a ‘means’, and Heidegger vehemently critiques it. For him, the greatest danger is not so much this reduction as such, but rather the veiling of Enframing, so that Enframing forgets even *itself*. Others would see such amnesia as part of the operation of ideology in which the dominant term remains unmarked, and thus ‘forgotten’. As a manifestation of Being, however, Enframing necessarily changes; it is ‘iterable’ in Derrida’s sense. A full appropriation, after all, might be the West’s deluded belief, but it is nonetheless impossible. There could be no such thing as change, or movement, were it to realize itself. There is no end to hegemonic struggle.

Within Enframing, we are for Heidegger faced with two choices; one to push forward nothing but what is revealed in ordering, and the other to realize that we too are on our

way to arrival, and that, as a result, we need to re-orient ourselves to the world and our existence, thereby re-introducing chance. Under the first option we too become standing reserve ('human resources') and partake in a narcissism at the species level, becoming blind to the ways in which the world reveals itself; in this case, humans no longer experience their essence, which goes *beyond* the human: Being. In the second option, humans are needed for the surmounting of Enframing, and yet they *correspond* to that surmounting, in that a surmounting of Enframing is a surmounting of (liberal individual) self (1977, 39). Human essence must open to the essence of technology, which is also Being. Instead of 'turning' into oblivion, Being may thereby turn 'homeward' into whatever is; challenging-forth may be transformed into a more harmonious bringing-forth. This is, of course, a graciously selective reading of Heidegger, and one should hold reservations over his implicit Earthy anti-technological bias and his privileging of the German language, and the way these arguably converge in his Nazism. What I want to draw out here is that this surmounting, and this corresponding to this surmounting, is, when viewed through the present discussion, testimony itself. One surmounts the liberal self at the same time as one testifies; one surmounts *in* this testimony.

To find a way to 'mourn the impossibility of mourning', to exappropriate, one should begin an accounting of previous imaginings of the human-technological relation, centering around the figure of the cyborg.

Images of the Cyborg

1 *Liberal*

In this common problematic the cyborg is taken as threatening, as a non-reflexive and involuntary exteriorization from the crypt. Technology-as-tool here reaches the inverse point of taking control of its maker. Liberal instrumentality, the foundation of Western Reason, is, at its (inverse) limit, Madness: the tool apocalyptically takes over the maker. A vicious spiral develops, which is usually contained through advisories to use our technologies 'wisely', to keep them under check. This discourse is correct to observe the irreducible difference between humans and technology, but it fails in denying the inevitable contamination of the two. Frankenstein is the archetype.

2 Fascist

The fascist cyborg is taken to be potentially helpful, even a Father figure – but only to the extent that it eliminates the threat of the fluid female, the technological environment, the Mother or matrix (the etymon of `matrix' being *mater*, or mother). The fascist cyborg usually leaves the human world upon elimination of the female threat. Technology is still a tool, but one embraced in the vain, but for that reason dangerous, hope of a time without it, a *pre-technical* humanity. Such images, as exteriorizations of our crypts, dramatize the dissolution of the self (*because* of the crypt and the logic of incorporation), and kill in an externalization of this fear. As Claudia Springer notes, these macho cyborgs are, paradoxically, *afraid* of sexuality, for it blurs boundaries and is obviously associated with reproduction, whereas these cyborgs know only *destruction* (1996).

One example would be from *Terminator 2* (James Cameron, 1991), wherein the macho Terminator T-800 (played by Arnold Schwarzenegger) kills the fluid Terminator T-1000 (played by the androgynous Robert Patrick). Though he is himself incapable, the T-800 reverently says at the end of the film: `I know now why you [humanity] cry'. In this manner, he submits to the supremacy of the non-technical (`pure') human, and finally obliterates himself so as to remove any trace of his presence.

3 (a) Cybernetic

In cybernetic discourse the difference between the cybernetic and the organic is elided. Given the resulting stasis, a desire for transcendence is effected, and taken to be liberatory. As in the musings of Hans Moravec, this discourse often posits a time when human consciousness will be able to be downloaded into a computer, leading to the possibility of everyone doing this so as to create a technological collective hive mind which could then spread outward into the universe (1999). This is seen as progressive evolution from our presently fleshy selves. This is not science but, at best, science fiction. The only means by which cognitive scientists working on artificial intelligence can lay claim to the title of science, with all the resources that become available to them the moment they do, is by predetermining human consciousness as being nothing more than the processing of *information*, thereby disregarding anything in *excess* of it – such as the affective body, or the unconscious – that, while being in `excess', nonetheless subtends

'information' itself. While there might well be 'information' 'in itself' on a computer hard disk, as soon as it means anything at all for a human it is cathected and given form by the unconscious. Of course, the fantastic exorcism of the unconscious in the literature of cognitive science itself betrays unconscious desire, however bland, as do the repeated affirmations of their practitioners that, with the aid of their science fiction technologies, they hope to live forever. The unconscious returns.

Though the capacity of the individual to master technology at first seems to evaporate, for the very difference *between* the two seems to have disappeared, in the final analysis Moravec *et al* choose to download their consciousness and choose to disappear, like more traditional liberals. Indeed, cybernetic discourse is really the liberal problematic at its limit in its desire for total transcendence. Though cybernetic discourse runs under the assumption that it is confronting technology (in that it is its subject and object of study and discourse), it is in fact not to the extent it still views technology as a tool, i.e., one in which to download one's consciousness. Though it implicitly claims to be it is not in any way mourning or introjection, but a heightening of incorporation. Cybernetic discourse is, however, easier to question than liberal discourse for the very reason that it is more overt, more obvious in its mad denial of incorporation. Finally, it can be little wonder that when consciousness has been equated with the technical one would want to disappear into the immortal ethereality of cyberspace, with all its echoes of Heaven.

3 (b) *Cyberpunk*

Here the cyborg becomes more ambiguous. Again, however, this discourse elides the difference between the cybernetic and the organic, also desiring transcendence through technology that doubles as religious salvation. Technology is again seen as a 'means' to an end, that is, cyberspatial Heaven. In both cybernetic and cyberpunk discourse the individual believes and chooses his or her (usually his) path, and testifies to the technical.

The difference between the two is that, in some moments, cyberpunk makes the denial of humanity's contamination by technology overt through its explicit narrative confrontations with technology. The desire for transcendence is profaned. The *cyber* in cyberpunk refers to the increasingly invasive technologized aspects of our lives, often perpetrated by transnational corporations that resemble empires, while *punk* refers to a protagonist seizing the tools of this invasion to fight back against the invasive forces or,

more often, to simply evade them. In a sense, cyberpunk is a projection of the prophecies of Moravec *et al*, but, to the extent this projection is accomplished within the confines of the capitalist market, a certain space has been cleared so as to open a line of questioning concerning technology – and capitalism. The now-classic example would be William Gibson's *Neuromancer*.

4 Cyborgpunk

This is Donna Haraway's famous cyborg: a conjunction of irreducibility of technology and the human. Her cyborg 'skips the step of original unity', re-telling so as to subvert the origin stories of the West (1991, 149). It is a supplementary figure, a figure of the supplement, obeying the logic of the 'neither...nor' and 'and... and'. Through it 'nature and culture are reworked; the one can no longer be the resource for appropriation or incorporation by the other' (1991, 151). Instead they all enter into fields of differences, where they conjoin in 'hybrid' fashion (1991, 149). Her cyborgs are 'wary of holism, but needy for connection', hybridizing not through identification so much as affiliation (1991, 151).

Like those of cyberpunk, these cyborgs move through the dystopic environment caused by liberal instrumentality. They do not, however, posit an individual choice (like 'jacking into cyberspace') as a way out, but move through these dystopias to, as Scott Bukatman suggests, produce immanent 'utopian visions if not visions of utopia' (1993, 64). These cyborgs do not so much seek to eliminate humanity (as fearful liberal narratives might warn) as to live alongside it, and to plead with humanity to admit the other within – that is, to be recognized.

If, as Haraway suggests, 'the replicant Rachel in the Ridley Scott film *Blade Runner* stands as the image of a cyborg culture's fear, love, and confusion' (1991, 179), then Roy, I would add, stands as its more explicit positivity, its playful subversion of the West's *telos* in the promise of a better future. Narratives like *Blade Runner* share points of convergence with cyberpunk while, at the same time, deconstructing them. There are no more dreams of transcendence, the affective body (and the unconscious) comes back, and a difference between the human and the technical is 'newly' marked: testimony. It should not, however, be inferred that testimony is to be equated with the organic in the sense of a stable referent – just the opposite, in fact. The 'org' in cyborgpunk is, most obviously,

meant to mark the re-entry of the body into such narratives; more precisely, it marks the re-entry of the body and its undecidabilities, its messiness, even its gooeyness (precisely: what escapes, and yet is not entirely foreign to, language). One example of this problematic is *Blade Runner*.

Blade Runner: The Eternal Gnawing Doubt

In the extensive journalistic and critical literature on the film, *Blade Runner* tends to be viewed in three ways. In the first, it is critiqued as being languid and lacking in character development, as not, in short, being 'human' enough. Pauline Kael polemicized thus: 'A visionary sci-fi movie that has its own look can't be ignored... [but] If anybody comes around with a test to detect humanoids, maybe Ridley Scott and his associates should hide' (in Bukatman 1997, 33). Similarly, *Variety* complained of a 'vacuum at the story's center' (ibid.). These attacks, I would suggest, are launched from a liberal perspective that fears *Blade Runner's* dehumanization of the humans and humanization of the replicants, its undermining of the human(ist) framework.

The second way of viewing the film is to insist on Deckard being himself a replicant. This view, prominent among some fans and bolstered by Scott's own interpretation, is the inverse of the previous one: here it is felt as though the human characters in *Blade Runner* are *too* human. Žižek is perhaps the most influential academic holding this view, which is for him formed against the background of Lacanian psychoanalysis and Hegelian philosophy (1993). He argues that the subject of Western societies is a chimera, and that in its place is, rather, a void, one that power must fill for its own successful operation. This void becomes visible in times of revolution, those brief moments between power formations; the task of the critic, he argues, is to 'occupy... *the place of this hole*', and thus to prevent power from forming and (re-)rendering the hole invisible as such (1993, 2). For Žižek, *Blade Runner* is a good example of this, but only to the extent that it demonstrates that humans are themselves replicants who just do not know it yet, and that, to become truly human, we must accept our own replicant-status. As he then argues, 'the implicit thesis of *Blade Runner* is that replicants are pure subjects precisely insofar as they *testify* that every positive, substantial content, inclusive of the most intimate fantasies, is not "their own" but already implanted... it is these very undecided, intermediate states which make me human' (41, my emphasis). In a footnote to this passage Žižek notes the parallel

to Kierkegaard's argument that humans are condemned to 'believe that we believe', for we 'cannot be certain that we actually believe' (1993, 247). To be *certain* would be robotic.

An eternal question of philosophy is: how do we *know* we are human? To which, and to link up with the emphasized term above, we can only *testify*. Žižek is certainly right to bring this out, but if, as he suggests, what is most important – what gives the impetus to testify – is our 'eternal gnawing doubt' (1993, 41) as to our status, pinning down the status of Deckard as a replicant seems to foreclose this, especially *when considering the film's audience and the practice of viewing*. Deckard, is, after all, the main protagonist, the person with whom we are meant to identify. Very soon into the film, however, we find ourselves having trouble with such identification, for this protagonist is barely 'human'. He does, indeed, seem 'empty', unworthy of our trust, and so we come to *affiliate* with him instead. Roy Batty, Deckard's rival, is set up as the antagonist, the one we are supposed to dislike. Very quickly, however, we come to affiliate with him too, as he shares more of the human traits we would expect out of Deckard. So we end up affiliating with both, immersed in the ambiguity and aporias at the heart of the film.

It is likely that most people who watch *Blade Runner* assume themselves fully human, and, having been shaped through liberal thought, are likely to at the very least be wary of cyborgs. If we *knew* Deckard to be a replicant – in conjunction with his dehumanized self – most viewers would not even affiliate with him, much less identify. Since the central tension of the film is *between* Deckard and Roy, such knowledge would erect a barrier between the viewer and the film, and, without an affiliation with Deckard turned sour through his emptiness, few viewers would be drawn into the climax of Roy's testimony. We have arrived, then, at the third predominant viewing, that of emphasizing, or rather keeping, the ambiguity of the film. The debates over whether Deckard is a replicant or not are endless, and should remain so, for such is the sublimity of a film that in the final analysis allows for as many readings as there are viewings. The reading offered here, then, opens onto an *infinity* of viewings, each one requiring the testimonials of the viewers as to Deckard's status and Roy's testimony, and the space(time) between. In a film where everything is uncertain, we can only testify as to our knowledge in accepting that such testimony, and such knowledge, will be tainted by fiction. In other words, it may be wrong, and we cannot thus be certain we actually believe what we believe: we can only, in

the end, believe in belief itself. Those who, like Žižek and Scott, insist on Deckard being a replicant are also testifying, but only to the extent that there may be a time when there is no more need to testify, when there is incontrovertible 'proof', that is, without contamination by fiction. In Žižek's case, as I have implied, this position is at odds with certain of his formulations, such as his wanting to keep safe an 'eternal gnawing doubt' as to our status.

As one is lost in determining the difference between the cyborg and the human, and in the film's confusing narration, so one is lost in the dystopic setting of the film – and as one is lost in the setting, one is unable to discern the difference between the cyborg and the human, or the proper course of the film narrative. It all works together to unsettle spectatorial privilege, and the masterful vision on which it depends. *Blade Runner* is a film that constantly references vision. Bukatman notes that in each of Douglas Trumbull's films where he served as the special photographic effects supervisor, there is at least one instance of the character(s) marvelling at their surroundings, thereby, along with Trumbull, 'testify[ing] to the beauty and terrifying power of the cinema' (1997, 25, my emphasis). In just the third scene of the film a giant disembodied eye impossibly reflects the whole of the city while looking at us, the audience, so that *we* are being watched *while* we watch. The paranoid nature of the film, of who is 'human' and who is not – and its relation to the gaze – is brought out. Moreover, Leon tries to kill Deckard by pressing his thumbs into his eyes, and Roy manages to do just that to Tyrell. The dialogue also references sight, with two prominent lines by Roy, one at Eye Works talking to the manufacturer of his eyes, 'If only you could see what I've seen with *your* eyes', the other at the end of the film testifying to Deckard: 'I've seen things you people wouldn't believe'.

With these two lines, Roy is, I argue, gesturing towards the *limit* of sight, and to the importance of something beyond the 'proof' of vision. At Eye Works, in the presence of the one who made his eyes, Roy testifies to the singularity of his, to the events they witnessed. They might have been manufactured within an objectified capitalist exchange (with Tyrell), but they nonetheless went beyond such a relation, becoming in some manner foreign to it. In the second of Roy's lines concerning sight the limit is fully reached, for what he is getting at is that despite the fact that his eyes were made by humans for utilitarian purposes, these very same humans would not *believe* the manufactured eyes. They would not accept his testimony – 'All those moments will be lost in time... like tears

in rain' – and yet Roy still gives it. It is up to Deckard, and, though affiliation, us, whether we accept it or not. And we might 'accept' it without even knowing, that is, we might forget the gift – as, indeed, we must for it to be one. After all, Deckard seems half asleep, and we have, likewise, been lulled by and into a movie moving at its 'own' pace, no longer using our eyes as tools of appropriation but as organs of touch. The erstwhile complacency of spectatorship is undone. Moving through the aporias, we participate.

Unlike most soundtracks which are mostly supplementary to the film in their additions (or more cynically: manipulations) of melodramatic affect, the Vangelis soundtrack in *Blade Runner* weaves its way into and out of the film. At times it is clear one is listening to a supplementary track, while at others it seems part of the city and the background noise. Along the same lines, one might also note the post-production sound problems in the film which at times seem to be part of every scene. There are obvious dubbings, which, when combined with awkward edits, leave the spectator bewildered. In denying 'viewer' mastery in determining the placement of the auditory track(s), the ears must become organs of touch as well.⁵ As they touch, they are touched.

Roy mourns, and we are invited, in turn, *in the turn*, to mourn Roy. Whereas the other replicants relied on their photographs as guarantors of their histories, Roy does not, being content to give his memories without any certainty that they will be, in (the) turn, accepted. While Leon and Rachel are overtly melancholic, photographic, Roy is mournful, cinematic. We watch a frozen Deckard begin to mourn, and we with him–Roy. A new space has been opened, or rather space-time, involving the film and the audience, making the boundaries of each porous in a questioning concerning technology, 'mourning the impossibility of mourning'.

⁵ Some – though not all – of these 'problems' have been 'cleaned up' in the recently released 'Final Cut', which is unfortunate. The Vangelis score, however, remains as haunting as it was previously, ever surprising and confusing the spectator.

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