A Note from the Editor

"Totalitarianism is latent in technology"

—Paul Virilio (1996)

One of Paul Virilio's enduring contributions has been his trenchant critique of technology. He incisively revealed several of technology's harmful consequences. Nevertheless, his criticisms most often were grounded on a technophobic approach that tended to entirely neglect the democratizing impulses latent in many technologies and technological assemblages that the digital turn has enabled us to generate. The current Volume of *Summerhill* takes a close look at some of the technological trajectories of digital technologies in order to assess and understand the global communication society and the deep issues of ethicality, politics and culture that underlie its rationality.

In the centerpiece that holds this volume together is a conversation with Prof. Robin Jeffrey who has paid close attention to the relationship between Media, Democracy and Politics in postcolonial India. Through his work, Jeffrey constantly brings into our attention the dynamics of the global and the local, mobility and stagnation, long durae and short durae and the fragility of the information systems.

T.T. Sreekumar, in his essay on the Politics of Cyborg, gestures to the particularity of cyborg futures, a future that would be mired in deeper inequalities and located in the differential experience of modernity. Through a summation and deeper analysis of debates on art, techno culture and techno politics the essay lays out the prospects of reconstituting the nature of dreams, revolts and futures in the realm of cyborg futures. He invokes the Janus-faced figure of the cyborg that Donna Haraway interpreted as the two different directions that our cyborg future may take—one that intensifies our experience of the masculinity orgy of war and the other exploring the tremendous possibility of emergence of communications-savvy cyborgs who can be agents of social change.

If the emergence of print has initiated dictionaries and encyclopedia to order and assign meaning to a world of voluminous information that it brought about, the digital explosion has impelled new forms of ordering and storing data. Various attempts like the Partition archives, family histories and memory projects are situated at the intersection of data collection, storage and retrieval redefining the concept of physically located archives and interrogating its organizational logic. Sai Kommaraju and P. Thirumal in their essay, attempt a sensory analysis of the Dalit Digital archives online, in which they argue that the Dalit digital archives shift the sensory nature of the archives from one of making visible to one of making heard; from visual registers to sonic registers, from disembodied and objective archival orders to embodied moorings. In their inquiry, they juxtapose the print with the new harbors of digital archives, a juxtaposition that is generative of debates around memory, archival imagination and marginalities.

What are the practices that have emerged in the digital scape that is relevant to contemporary India? In the context of film and video production that has been enabled by the digital turn, Hemantika Singh tries to rethink the idea of authorship in the digital media. In their analysis, they try to shift the attention from the models of thinking about the film-maker/author as an individual genius to a collective and contingent process of encounter at the site of the filmic text, an encounter they describe as intertextual, contingent and socio=political.

The rather exciting field of cell phone studies has established the meaning making capacity of mobile phone usage and mobility has emerged as a key term, bringing together studies in migration, tourism and urban systems with emphasis on experience and embodiment. Manisha Madapathy asks what exactly constitutes the sensorium of mobile phones. By examining the centrality of mobile phone messages and circulation in recent riots, lynching and violence in India she takes the debates on mobile phones and embodiment further.

In her poetic meditations on the desolate landscape through short digital postcards of poetry, Gowhar Yaqoob creates a visual ekphrasis of the desolate landscape of Kashmir- of ruins, rubble and abjection when she writes

of the soldier at the Line of control who wants his newly wed to know about his assignment to create a moment at a poor landscape, the teenage girls who wonder about the history teacher's silence on the desolate landscape, the wind mill supervisor's lone moments watching the landscape of calm sky.

How has this vast landscape of frictions in history, technology, human–machine relations and art reflected in the humanities in India? Setting up itself against the grain of a global narrative of Digital Humanities and its universalizing tendencies, Puthiya Purayil Sneha's essay maps the many initiatives that records and archives texts and practices and in the process reimagine the very objects of study in fields as diverse as literature, anthropology, film studies and musicology. Many questions related to a neo-liberal takeover of the university system in India, archival imaginations, pedagogical interventions and shape shifting of various disciplines through the digital turn deserve closer attention.

Rightly recognizing the 'global' as ubiquitous, the anthropologist Anna Tsing (2011) suggests that the 'global' comes into life in what she terms as "frictions", a process that exists through the grooves etched by people and things going somewhere as they are helped along by those who move them. These essays enable us to listen to the digital media as they emit and exist through processes of 'friction' in what can be described as the globalscape of digital media.

References

Paul Virilio and Carlos Oliveira. "The Silence of the Lambs: Paul Virilio in Conversation". In *CTHEORY.* Vol 19. No 1-2. 1996. p. 3.

Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton University Press, 2011.

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