
iZombie Cyborg Dancers: Rechoreographing Smartphone Abusers

Joshua M. Hall

William Paterson University
hallj38@wpunj.edu

ABSTRACT: Compulsive smartphone users' psyches, today, are increasingly directed away from their bodies and onto their devices. This phenomenon has now entered our global vocabulary as "smartphone zombies," or what I will call "iZombies." Given the importance of mind to virtually all conceptions of human identity, these compulsive users could thus be productively understood as a kind of human-machine hybrid entity, the cyborg. Assuming for the sake of argument that this hybridization is at worst axiologically neutral, I will construct a kind of phenomenological psychological profile of the type of cyborg which engages in these patterns of behavior. I follow Judith Butler in seeing this identity as the result of performance practices, which as such can be modified or replaced using other performances. Pursing one such alternative, I compose a dancing critique that "reverse engineers" the choreographies implied by these cyborgs' survival practices. The upshot of this critique is that their movement patterns do indeed align closely to those of horror cinema's zombies. I therefore conclude by suggesting a few possible choreographic imperatives to facilitate more enabling ways of being for iZombie cyborgs today.

Compulsive Smartphone Users' Minds as Extended

THE POINT OF THIS FIRST section for my overall argument is that it is strategically counterproductive to treat smartphones as entirely external and

independent of (at least) those who use them compulsively, because the nature and quality of those users' cognition, and thus their very minds, have been changed as a result of incorporating smartphone technology. Thus, any attempted solution to (what an increasing number of critics are calling) the "smartphone zombie apocalypse" which focuses on removing the phone entirely, or on making the phone less central to the user's life, is likely to founder on pragmatic grounds. For any readers unfamiliar with the extended mind thesis, it constitutes one of the four pillars of 4E cognitive science, where "4E" is short for a view of cognition as "embodied, embedded, extended, and enacted."

The flashpoint for the extended 1/4 of this approach is a 1998 essay by Andy Clark and David Chalmers entitled "The Extended Mind." In it, to justify their position, Clark and Chalmers propose several thought experiments. In the first of these, a laboratory subject rotates an image displayed on a computer screen in one of the following three ways: (a) in their head (so to speak), (b) using a rotate button on the computer, or (c) telekinetically (through a futuristic neural implant). Such combinations of human beings and tools constitute, the authors continue, "a *coupled* system that can be seen as a cognitive system in its own right" (8, emphasis original). To illustrate this point, they then offer the example of the board game Scrabble, in which the physical manipulation of the block letters is part of a player's cognitive act of forming words (9-10). In defending their extended mind thesis against common objections thereto, Clark and Chalmers first distinguish between mind and consciousness, noting the now-consensus that there is in fact such a thing as nonconscious cognition. Second, they address the objection that such couplings of organism and environment are too easily decoupled for their combination to count as extended cognition.

Contra the latter objection, they observe that other easily decoupled systems are nevertheless freely admitted as cognition, and then go so far as to anticipate—and remember that this essay dates from more than twenty years ago!—the existence of smartphones. "What if people always carried," they ask, "a pocket calculator, or had them implanted?" (11). This then-hypothetical is now actual, of course, since every smartphone is both literally a calculator (i.e. a complex computational machine) and also contains a colloquial "calculator" (i.e. a software application, or "app," that performs basic arithmetical operations). In another similarly prophetic note (relative to today's smartphone world), the authors then present language as an example of an external tool that has evolved into intimacy with cognition, in the sense that we augment our thinking using words qua visible (written) and tactile (Braille) markings and audible objects (spoken words) (11).

Thirdly on this smartphone-prophetic note, the authors offer the following vision:

Within the lifetime of an organism, too, individual learning may have moulded the brain in ways that rely on cognitive extensions that surrounded us as we learned. Language is again a central example here, as are the various physical and computational artifacts that are routinely used as cognitive extensions by children in schools and by trainees in numerous professions (12).

Smartphones, I would add, have become an integral part of the education and socialization of children in the post-industrial world.

But the most smartphone-relevant moment in the essay, perhaps, is Clark and Chalmers' famous concluding thought experiment. It involves a hypothetical Alzheimer's sufferer named "Otto" who carries a notebook with him everywhere, in which he writes down any information necessary for his daily routines. The authors interpret this notebook as, in effect, Otto's external memory bank, which helps him compensate for the internal memory bank in his brain that has been damaged by Alzheimer's (13). To use the authors' example, Otto could write down the location of a museum in his notebook, then consult that entry whenever he has a desire to go to the museum. They claim that the seamless, second-nature way in which Otto thus uses the notebook during his ordinary cognitive activities would entail that his beliefs (including about museum locations) extend beyond his brain and skin and into his notebook. To defend this position, Clark and Chalmers propose the following four stipulations:

First, the notebook is a constant in Otto's life – in cases where the information in the notebook would be relevant, he will rarely take action without consulting it. Second, the information in the notebook is directly available without difficulty. Third, upon retrieving information from the notebook he automatically endorses it. Fourth, the information in the notebook has been consciously endorsed at some point in the past, and indeed is there as a consequence of this endorsement (17).

All four of these stipulations are also easily satisfied by compulsive smartphone use. Compulsive users rarely act without using them, can access their information easily, automatically endorse that information, and the current content is a result of their cumulative prior endorsements.

Additionally in regard to the above block quote, Clark and Chalmers invoke on that same page the foremost necessary condition for the existence of smartphones, namely the Internet. And they do so in a way that further supports smartphones' candidacy as objects of mental extension. Considering whether the worldwide web amounts to extended cognition, they write that "The Internet is likely to fail on multiple counts, unless I am unusually computer-reliant, facile with the technology, and trusting," with the immediate proviso that "information in certain files on my computer may qualify" (17). Compulsive smartphone users meet all three of these independently sufficient exception conditions. They are "unusually" reliant on computers (compared to previous generations), "facile" with their smartphones and their apps, and—as the election of Trump has shown—trusting.

Thus, by Clark and Chalmers' own logic here, smartphones can feature as an external component of extended mind. Furthermore, since the social media applications that dominate compulsive smartphone usage combine the Internet with social relationships, the authors' subsequent suggestion that cognition also be "socially extended" (for example in a codependent romantic relationship) strengthens the case for smartphone extended minds even more. Similarly, and to conclude my

first section, the authors suggest that extended cognition implies a correlatively extended “self” (18). Their emphasis, with this point, is on seeing “agents themselves as spread into the world,” and on seeing “ourselves more truly as creatures of the world” (18). To this, I would add that an “extended self” could also mean a kind of singular macro-self that has metastasized (as it were) across multiple human bodies, transforming formerly independent embodied minds into drones, or zombies.

Smartphone-Extended Minds as Cyborgs

In the prior section, I attempted to show that, if one accepts the reasoning in Clark and Chalmers’ articulation of their extended mind thesis, it follows that mind can extend specifically into smartphones, at least for compulsive users. To get clearer on what results from this joint mind’s collaborative cognition, I now turn to Donna Haraway’s argument that all late twentieth century homo sapiens are cyborgs. The point of this second section for my overall argument is that the extension of minds from brains to smartphones entails a fundamental transformation for not only the mental dimension of compulsive smartphone users, but also for their bodies. Thus, any attempted solution to the smartphone zombie apocalypse which grants the extended mind thesis, but which focuses only on cognition (to the exclusion of embodiment), is unlikely to be sufficiently holistic to be effective.

To make the case for this mind-and-body transformation, I will now offer a new interpretation of Donna Haraway’s famous “Cyborg Manifesto.” I begin by noting its much less famous subtitle: “Science, Technology and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century,” which alerts the reader that Haraway’s manifesto is primarily a feminist, and secondarily a Marxian one. In short, it seeks militant gendered justice by way of dialectical materialism. Haraway’s first section is called “An ironic dream of a common language for women in the integrated circuit” (5). She then paraphrases this dream as an “ironic political myth faithful to feminism, socialism, and materialism,” with “faithful” immediately qualified as intended in the sense in which “blasphemy is faithful” (5). At the “center” of this blasphemy, Haraway concludes, “is the image of the cyborg” (5). That her conception of cyborgs is thus self-consciously mythical and ironic foreshadows how easily her detailed conception of it gels with my satirical deployment of the figure of the zombie for compulsive smartphone cyborgs.

The gist of Haraway’s detailed conception begins in the manifesto with her oft-quoted definition of a cyborg. “A cyborg is a cybernetic organism,” she writes, “a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction” (5). More specifically, as she elaborates on the next page, the cyborg’s fiction is of the scientific variety. Contemporary science fiction, she observes, “is full of cyborgs,” adding that “the boundary between science fiction and social reality is an optical illusion” (6). Given the implication of this claim, that science fiction creatures move among us in real life almost invisibly, a further implication is that the science fiction figure of the zombie is welcomed into the machine menagerie of everyday life. Thus, someone as innocuous as a smartphone user could qualify for cyborg status. Haraway’s further unpacking of this cyborg concept also resonates with Clark and Chalmers’ “Extended Mind” essay, and even more so with Clark’s later work on

extended minds. I refer, more specifically, to Haraway's use of the concept of "couplings," including between "organism and machine" (6). In his *Being There*, Clark writes of "fluent coupling between the system and a real-world environment" (2). Dance, too, involves (often literal) coupling. Moreover, this reference to fluent coupling foreshadows the importance of dance as an example throughout Clark's book.

Just as extended minds seem ultimately positive for Clark, so the cyborg seems for Haraway, if not inherently positive, then at least something that feminist activists ought to view positively for strategic effectiveness. This is not to say that Haraway is blind to its limitations and flaws, in her discussion of which there is much that resonates with zombies. For example, Haraway claims that "the cyborg is also the awful apocalyptic *telos* of the 'West's' escalating dominations of abstract individuation, an ultimate self untied at last from all dependency, a man in space" (8). In other words, cyborgs make the most of their physical movements without input or cooperation from the physical movements of anything else. In the case of compulsive smartphone cyborgs, they instead drift aimlessly through the physical space on which their virtual space supervenes. The cause of this movement style is perhaps found in what Haraway identifies as the cyborgs' genealogy. They are, she writes, "the illegitimate offspring of militarism and patriarchal capitalism" (9). Just like a stereotypical patriarchal male, and the military forces he commands, the compulsive smartphone user is oblivious and/or indifferent to its body's negative impacts on others' bodies.

After this critical concession, Haraway returns to her definition of the cyborg, which she claims essentially crosses the following three important boundaries: human/nonhuman animal, animal/machine, and physical/nonphysical. The latter two dichotomies are the most important in the case of smartphone cyborgs, so they will be my focus here. Regarding the animal/machine boundary, Haraway first notes that, prior to the Information Age,

basically machines were not self-moving, self-designing, autonomous. They could not achieve man's dream, only mock it. They were not man, an author to himself, but only a caricature of that masculinist reproductive dream. To think they were otherwise was paranoid. Now we are not so sure. Late twentieth-century machines have made thoroughly ambiguous the difference between natural and artificial, mind and body, self-developing and externally designed, and many other distinctions that used to apply to organisms and machines. Our machines are disturbingly lively, and we ourselves frighteningly inert (11).

Put simply, contemporary machines are increasingly similar to humans, and it is no longer obvious that there is a sharp line between them and us. The final sentence of this block quote captures perfectly the flashing and beeping smartphone in the hands of an otherwise immobile human body.

As for the third boundary that cyborgs cross, the physical/nonphysical, Haraway's description of it contains three claims resonant with smartphone cyborgs in particular. First, she notes that "Modern machines are quintessentially electronic

devices: they are everywhere and they are invisible” (12-13). Not only are smartphones electronic, and everywhere in contemporary U.S. urban environments, but they are also invisible insofar as the content on their surfaces are invisible to all but the users (or someone situated very closely thereto). Second, Haraway adds that cyborgs “are as hard to see politically as materially. They are about consciousness, or its simulation. They are floating signifiers moving in pickup trucks across Europe” (13). Smartphone users, similarly, (a) are approaching 100% of the U.S. population, at least in most urban, middle-to-upper class spaces—hiding in the plain sight of ubiquity; and (b) frequently simulate consciousness, including (c) when driving or riding down the highway. Finally in regard to the physical/nonphysical boundary, the following quote is perhaps the most poetically apt for smartphones:

Our best machines are made of sunshine; they are all light and clean because they are nothing but signals, electromagnetic waves, a section of a spectrum, and these machines are eminently mobile – a matter of immense human pain in Detroit and Singapore (13).

The three specific resonances with smartphones here are (a) the “mobile” half of “mobile phone,” (b) the pain for Detroit’s automotive transportation industry caused by smartphones’ virtual transportation, and (c) the pain for Singapore of its poor women of color constructing microchips for smartphones.

On the latter subject, of female Asian smartphone workers, and to end my reading of Haraway’s manifesto on a dancing note, her concluding summary suggests that “it might be the unnatural cyborg women making chips in Asia and spiral dancing in Santa Rita Jail whose constructed unities will guide effective oppositional strategies” (14). Santa Rita Jail is a California prison which routinely brings in musical performers to play for their minimum-security inmates, who greatly enjoy dancing to the music. Thus, Haraway explicitly identifies and symbolizes her new cyborgs as dancers, which bodes well for my dancing interpretation of smartphone cyborgs below. Before moving on to that analysis, though, I will first buttress Haraway’s linkage of cyborg identity to dance by retracing Judith Butler’s argument for the danced nature of identity *per se*.

Cyborg Identity as Dance Performance

In my second section, I attempted to show that if one accepts the reasoning in Haraway’s “Cyborg Manifesto,” then the extension of human minds into smartphones entails the creation of a new ontological entity, which she terms “cyborgs,” and which she associates both implicitly and explicitly with dance. To buttress this conception of cyborg identity, as well as its connection to dance, I now turn to Judith Butler’s argument for identity as, at a metaphysical level, a kind of residue of repeated performances. The point of this third section for my overall argument is that the cyborg identity of smartphone extended minds is fundamentally a process of dance. Thus, any attempted solution to the smartphone zombie apocalypse which grants the existence of Haraway’s cyborgs, but which sees those cyborgs as constituted by some

sort of fixed core or essence, is likely to be too rigid and complacent, at a theoretical or methodological level, to facilitate sustainable evolution and positive change.

Although Butler's *Gender Trouble* focuses on the sex/gender aspects of embodiment, her claims can easily be extended, *mutatis mutandis*, to identity as a whole, which is the goal of my interpretation here. Early on, Butler observes that "representation is extended only to what can be acknowledged as a subject" (4). The context of this claim is Butler's discussion of the central goal of the women's suffrage movement, namely full legal and political representation for women. Butler's critique of this goal, following Simone de Beauvoir, is that the concept of "woman" is a social construct, which neither corresponds to any natural (i.e. precultural) group of entities, nor refers (in its conventional usage) to many of the bodies of people who identify as female. Butler's examples of the latter include lesbians, women of color, and intersex people (to which I would add transwomen). Put in Haraway's terms, one could say that there is a kind of cyborg-phobia in the way that our institutions deploy the word "woman," a fear of those who do not fit preexisting notions about who a "real" or "natural" woman is. Consequently, those cyborgs are insufficiently represented in the struggle for gendered justice.

Instead, Butler continues, "juridical systems of power *produce* the subjects they subsequently come to represent" (4). If one thinks, with Plato and others, of the body politic as a group of dancers, and of the rulers as choreographers, then one can easily put Butler's point in explicitly dancing terms. To wit, selected bodies are first socialized to perform the role of "woman," with all analyses of women (including feminist ones) subsequently directed only toward the bodies already socialized to perform the role of woman correctly—where "correctly" means "recognizably" (4). In other words, the fact that certain bodies are consistently cast to play a particular role in society's "ballet" (in this case, primarily cis-het middle-to-upper class white women cast as "woman") leads social critiques to rely on homogeneous conceptions of that role. Thus there is established a kind of negative feedback loop, punishing deviance from dominant cultural norms for "women," which norms are implicitly upper-middle class, straight, white, cisgender, able-bodied, etc. In Butler's words, "the feminist subject turns out to be discursively constituted by the very political system that is supposed to facilitate its emancipation" (4). Put more simply, feminism (in the era in which Butler was writing) had tended to attempt to liberate only "normal" women.

If this is true, however, one might wonder why there is not more evidence of this targeting, socializing, rewarding and punishing. Anticipating this objection, Butler explains that "juridical subjects are invariably produced through certain exclusionary practices that do not 'show' once the juridical structure of politics has been established" (5). More specifically, although the law presents itself as relating to subjects who exist prior to the law, Butler suggests the following: "Perhaps the subject, as well as the invocation of a temporal 'before', is constituted by the law as the fictive foundation of its own claim to legitimacy" (5). In other words, the law includes the fantasy of a pre-legal natural world, populated with natural and pre-societal humans, even though the law presents that world as an actual reality outside the law.

This claim recalls Haraway's claim that today we are all cyborgs, which means that we are all figures from science fiction. In this sci-fi context, one could perhaps interpret the fiction of a natural, organic, pre-societal "woman" as a kind of hologram, or ghost. To resist this hologram/ghost army of our juridical institutions, Butler declares that the "task" is "to formulate within this constituted frame a critique of the categories of identity that contemporary juridical structures engender, naturalize, and immobilize" (8). In other words, Butler suggests that we as feminists go on the offensive, attacking the ghosts/holograms by showing them to be fully unnatural. More specifically, against these "reifications of gender and identity," Butler offers "*a feminist genealogy of the category of women*" (9). By "genealogy" here, Butler means the philosophical method pioneered by Nietzsche and elaborated by Foucault.

The upshot of Butler's genealogy is that the analogy—*sex is to gender as nature is to culture*—disguises the following crucial fact: "gender must also designate the very apparatus of production whereby the sexes themselves are established" (11). That is, gender is a performing activity rather than an entity. Complementarily, Butler affirms a quote from Beauvoir, "the body is a situation," from which Butler infers that "'the body' is itself a construction, as are the myriad 'bodies' that constitute the domain of gendered subjects" (13). In other words, various forces go invisibly into the making of a human body, which seems vividly true in the case of the machine-animal hybrid bodies of smartphone cyborgs. The primary political implication of Butler's performative analysis of identity in *Gender Trouble* is what she calls an "open coalition," the method of which is to "affirm identities that are alternately instituted and relinquished according to the purposes at hand" (22). For example, a person could adopt a smartphone user identity for a certain period of time, or on certain occasions, rather than performing that identity as if it were a permanent state of affairs. In other words, one could go from being a human to a cyborg, and back to a human, as called for by a given situation.

The basis for this resistance, Butler claims, is that "the 'coherence' and 'continuity' of 'the person' are not logical or analytical features of personhood, but, rather, socially instituted and maintained norms of intelligibility" (23). That is, bodies become various different people over time. In the case of smartphone users, they need not always have their smartphone in hand, or ready to hand. Smartphone identity is, as Butler claims of gender identity, "the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce appearance of substance, a natural sort of being" (43-44). Put simply, if you repeat a habit long enough, it becomes second nature; use your smartphone compulsively, and you become a smartphone cyborg zombie.

The second chapter of *Gender Trouble* focuses on a discussion that does not generalize as well as the first chapter to from gender identity to cyborg identity. Nevertheless, the end of the second chapter contains a discussion particularly relevant for smartphone cyborg identity, regarding the psychoanalytic concept of "incorporation." As contrasted with "introjection," incorporation occurs when a person compensates for the loss of a loved one by, as it were, taking the deceased person into their own body. While Freud and his followers link this incorporation to melancholy, Butler endorses psychoanalyst Roy Schafer's major modification of the concept, which he views as "a fantasy and not a process; the interior space into which

an object is taken is imagined, and imagined within a language that can conjure and reify such spaces” (86). But if this is true, Butler asks,

Where is this incorporated space? If it is not literally within the body, perhaps it is *on* the body as its surface signification such that the body must itself be understood *as* an incorporated space (86).

In other words, the space of incorporation is less like the “guts” or bones, and more like the surface of the skin. Or, more precisely, the skin as a kind of virtual space on which to project symbols, like a tattoo of the Chinese character for “crisis” (危機). The relevance of this point to smartphone cyborgs is that it supports Haraway’s understanding of the issue, which implies that cyborgs can incorporate smartphones externally (without having to literally take the phones inside their bodies).

As to healing from incorporation, Butler first rejects the famous proposal from psychoanalyst and philosopher Julia Kristeva. Kristeva claims that the loss is originally the loss of the connection to the maternal body, which is demanded by the paternalistic law. In response, Kristeva calls for a “subversion” of that law by tapping into the maternal, “semiotic” dimension of language, connected to sound, feeling, and poetic creativity. Butler rejects Kristeva’s solution, in part, on the grounds that Kristeva’s “semiotic” dimension of language is merely another legal fiction, posited by the law as preceding the law, while in actuality being the law’s own original artefact. In the place of Kristeva’s solution, Butler suggests that, if “subversion is possible, it will be a subversion from within the terms of the law, through the possibilities that emerge when the law turns against itself and spawns unexpected permutations of itself” (119). Put differently, rather than trying to fight the law from outside (which cannot be accessed in language), we should reshape it from within.

From this I infer that the Butlerian cure for smartphone zombiehood would be a modification of smartphones’ use (rather than discarding them from the outset), in sympathy with Haraway’s affirmation of cyborgs. In support of my cyborg-friendly interpretation, Butler later in *Gender Trouble* affirms Mary Douglas’ claim that “what constitutes the limit of the body is never merely material,” and that “the surface, the skin, is systematically signified by taboos and anticipated transgressions” (167). As a result, Butler concludes that “the boundaries of the body become, within [Douglas’] analysis, the limits of the social *per se*” (167). Or, in Butler’s own modification of this view, “the boundaries of the body” become “the limits of the socially hegemonic” (167). The difference between these two conceptions is that, while Douglas views the boundary as fixed universally by society as a whole, Butler sees the boundary as, instead, resistible by those who challenge oppressive norms and institutions. That is, bodies according to Butler extend as far as dominant social forces allow, from which she infers that “the naturalized notion of ‘the’ body is itself a consequence of taboos that render that body discrete by virtue of its stable boundaries” (169).

Applying this point to smartphone cyborgs, dominant social forces have allowed the body to extend into smartphones, and neither this new extension, nor the pre-smartphone bodily limits, were natural or organic. In other words, whenever the

taboos change (as they have repeatedly in human history), what is conceived as “the body itself” changes along with them. Taking advantage of this reality, finally, allows one to change the conception of the limits of the body intentionally, which is what I will propose in my next section. Put briefly, we need to establish and fortify new taboos that make explicit the importance of the non-smartphone parts of bodies, both the cyborg’s own body, and the bodies of others. In other words, and to conclude this third section, I suggest that compulsive smartphone cyborgs should choose to dance differently, so as to achieve better new identities, by extending their sense of embodiment beyond their smartphones, through others’ smartphones, and into the non-smartphone bodies of other users. Before getting into the details of this proposal, however, I will first give an overview of my figuration of philosophy of dance, with which I will then offer a dancing analysis of the dancing performance of smartphone cyborg identity.

Zombie-Cyborg Dance Analysis, Utilizing Figuration

To introduce my figuration philosophy of dance, I begin by returning briefly to Butler, whose work is the basis for one of the three components of one of its four central aspects of dance, or “Moves.” More specifically, Butler contributes, to the Move called “resilience,” the component of “flourishing recirculation.” In essence, flourishing recirculation signifies that the way to flourish is to keep moving, which in turn necessitates starting with well-worn circuits and doing whatever possible to make those pathways better suited to one’s body and its ways of moving through the world. Butler’s insight here, which draws on Nietzsche by way of Foucault, is that compulsion, repetition, and circularity need not be entirely negative or vicious. Instead, Butler advocates for improvising each variation on one’s compulsory theme, which enables one to bend the compulsive circle into a spiral with an escape trajectory, wherein one finds at least a degree of agency.

Butler’s most famous example of this liberating riffing on compulsion is the phenomenon of drag, which she introduces in the context of a “walking” performance at a drag ball. In her words, drag “fully subverts the distinction between inner and outer psychic space and effectively mocks both the expressive model of gender and the notion of a true gender identity” (174). The role of mockery and laughter here are crucial, but must be carefully deployed, in order to resist a pathological, oppressive repetition. Despite Butler’s concession on this point, some critics have objected to Butler’s conception, claiming that it offers too little for political action. For my part, however, I hold with those who see greater potential in her later work, including its productive engagements with other thinkers of liberation and social justice. On this note of social justice, I now turn to my overview of figuration, which is based thereon.

To repeat, figuration is structured around four central constructs dance Moves, namely “posture,” “gesture,” “grace” and “resilience.” As for what counts as “dance,” I follow the school of natural language philosophy in an attempt to include all the divergent phenomena that we tend to describe as dances today. Put simply, I intend figuration and its Moves to apply, not only to literal dances, such as ballet and the waltz, but also to borderline dances, such as the mating dance of many bird species, and even to figurative dances such as the “dance” of the celestial bodies

through the cosmos and the textual “dance” of a sophisticated writer. With this background in place, I will now elaborate on these four Moves, with an emphasis on the final, substantive phrase for each, as this is the most important component.

First, by “posture,” I mean “the dynamic imitation of stasis.” The point here is that any living animal, even when not obviously moving, is *always* covertly moving, at least internally, in the process of maintaining the appearance of rest. Second, by “gesture,” I mean “the carrying-across funding language.” With this strange phrasing I am attempting to suggest the etymological meaning of gesture (which is “to carry across”), in the context of the fact that all gesture (including linguistic gesture) is both “funded” (or invested by) and “founded” (or created on the basis of) the movements of bodies. Third, by “grace” I mean “a pleasing figure/ground reversal.” The figure and ground here are the organism and its environment, because in consummately graceful movement, the environment seems to move seamlessly through the organism. And fourth, by “resilience” I mean the aforementioned, Butlerian “flourishing recirculation.” My attempt here is to suggest resilience’s etymological meaning of “leaping back” or “jumping again,” in part because that foregrounds its definition as always springing back into shape, always ready for more, persisting through time’s deformations.

Having offered a brief overview of figuration, I now turn to an analysis of the smartphone zombie cyborg dance. I begin with figuration’s account of the posture of animal dance in general. Animal posture, for figuration, is “spatially minimal performances with spatially maximal results, which grow out of a necessarily social setting, and which mask animals’ intellectual adaptation through what has historically appeared to humans as instincts.” In the case of the smartphone cyborg-zombie identity dance, the spatial “minimal” is the restriction of motion to the surface of the phone. The “maximal results” are the severe physical and psychological effects of this fixity, including injuries and accidental death, along with exacerbated isolation and social anxiety. The “necessarily social setting” is the virtual social setting represented by social media. And the adaptation masked as instinct is the effortful pursuit of social networking and success, which nevertheless gives the external appearance of an instinctive addiction response.

Animal gesture, figuration defines as “the commandeering of body parts and environments into communicative functions which can be performed by various members of the same society, and which require the engagement of entire bodies for any meaningfully linguistic phenomenon to arise.” The “commandeering” in smartphone cyborg-zombies is the repurposing of body parts toward smartphone activities, especially the fingertips and eyes. The “same member” referent would be the interchangeability or substitutability of smartphone users, due to smartphones’ status as (among other things) capitalist fetishes. And “entire bodies” applies insofar it is not just the eyes and fingertips which must be engaged, but also the rest of the cyborg’s body. For example, the trunk and limbs are usually rigidly fixed, lest they divert energy and focus away from the device, even though doing so may jeopardize the cyborg’s physical and psychological wellbeing in the long term.

Animal grace, figuration defines as “hyper-dramatization of practical activities, which highlights the species-importance of activities which far surpass the

importance of any particular organism performing it, which in turn suggests an analogously greater importance of entire non-human species relative to any particular human organism.” The dramatization of the practical by smartphone cyborg-zombies consists in the theatrical nature of social media activity, most of which centers on everyday minutiae. The “species activities” here are predominantly communication and networking among humans qua social animals. And the “non-human species” is perhaps the cyborg “species” itself, as opposed to the pre-smartphone homo sapiens species that preceded it.

Finally, figuration defines animal resilience as “hyperbolic imitations of actual conflict, which appear random and insane beyond those familiar with the species, consisting often of physical circular movements enabling temporal cycles of life to continue.” The “conflict imitations” in smartphone cyborgs are primarily online debates and commentary, which infamously often contain a degree of hostility, profanity and prejudice unthinkable in most face-to-face interactions. The apparent “randomness” and “insanity” seem to be perceived most vividly by non-cyborg humans (especially Baby Boomers). And the “circular motions” are those of the fingertips extending to the screen and retracting, while the “cycles of life” are the life cycles of late capitalism, as the U.S. economy becomes increasingly centered on smartphones, thereby dragging the world economy in its wake.

Bringing these analyses of the four Moves on animal grace together, one gets a clearer understanding of why compulsive usage causes smartphone cyborgs to become zombies. To wit, they devote most of their mindfulness to a very small percentage of their total material being. And most of whatever consciousness does occur in the cyborgs is not directed toward any other body in shared physical space (whether the cyborg’s own, or that of another cyborg, or that of a nonhuman animal). Instead, a kind of collective herd instinct for abstract affirmation, validation and connection supervenes on, and transcends, the individual cyborg organism. Or, more charitably, their limited consciousness could be compared to the awareness of individual ants, bees, and other organisms belonging to “hive mind” species.

Although one could of course affirm or critique this zombie behavior from various perspectives and values systems external to smartphone cyborgs, I will not do so here. Instead, I offer an internal, pragmatic critique, the gist of which is that this zombie dance is ultimately self-defeating and self-destructive, even by the smartphone cyborgs’ own explicit standards. More specifically, no species, including those at least partially artificial species such as the smartphone cyborg, can afford to focus such a large percentage of their individual energies on such a small percentage of individual bodies and their powers. Evidence for this conclusion includes the fact that organisms’ neglecting most of their bodies is directly correlated with higher rates of injury and sickness.

In the case of the smartphone cyborg-zombies in particular, the most pervasive of these neglect-based self-destructive problems are those which are caused by poor diets and lack of exercise, including diabetes, cancer, and heart disease. Thus, for smartphone cyborgs’ own sake, they desperately need a dance critique of their current identity performances, along with some alternate choreographic strategies to facilitate less (unnecessarily) disempowering identities. To the latter, therefore, I now turn, after a brief recap of the foregoing analyses.

Figuration toward a Less-Disempowering Smartphone Cyborg Identity

In this article, I first attempted to show that, according to Andy Clark and David Chalmers' "The Extended Mind," minds can extend beyond the skin and into smartphones. Second, I explored how, following Donna Haraway, the result of this mental extension into smartphones amounts to the creation of a new entity, the smartphone cyborg. Third, I traced the implication, from Judith Butler's account of gender identity as dance performance, that smartphone cyborg identity is also the near-invisible result of repeated performances. And fourth, on the basis of these three points, I offered a figuration dancing analysis of smartphone cyborg identity performance, which revealed why this performance makes smartphone cyborgs into zombies. Now, in this ultimate section, I will sketch four choreographic imperatives, intended to help smartphone cyborgs by altering the dance of their identity into something less unnecessarily self-disempowering than that of a zombie.

First, following the Move of posture, a smartphone cyborg should act to preserve its entire body, to allow a maximal amount of itself to dance. This would require diverting some time, energy, and attention away from its metal and plastic, and toward its flesh. To facilitate this, I offer the following choreographic imperative: *cease or minimize smartphone activity in the presence of significant perceivable ambient motion, whether in the rest of one's own body, the bodies of others, or moving parts of the environment (such as branches in the wind, and speeding automobiles)*. In other words, only engage in smartphone activity when oneself, other organisms, and the environment are predominantly still. The self-destructiveness of rejecting this imperative is that the cyborg would likely fail to notice those physical and psychological threats to its continued existence which primarily affect its fleshly component.

Second, following the Move of gesture, a cyborg should try to engage a maximal amount of its body in a maximally active way. This would require channeling social media's powers into the facilitation of more real-life events, including literal dances. The corresponding choreographic imperative is as follows: *before engaging in a smartphone activity (or at least before engaging in a new type of smartphone activity), ask yourself, "In what full-bodied activity will this smartphone activity terminate?"* In other words, given that one has become a smartphone cyborg, it makes sense to integrate and weave together one's fleshly and non-fleshly parts as much as possible. Or, more simply, each part of the cyborg should act to benefit the whole cyborg. And while the self-destructiveness of rejecting the first choreographic imperative exposes oneself to external threats, rejecting this second imperative risks exposure to internal threats.

Third, following the Move of grace, a smartphone cyborg should direct more of its smartphone time, energy, and cognition to practical results for a maximal number of species. This would require modifying activities in line with what cyborgs have in common with other species (including humans, nonhuman animals, and plants).

Central among these commonalities is embodiment, as opposed to the information processing of virtual content. The choreographic imperative here is as follows: *whenever engaging in smartphone activities that involve interacting with non-cyborgs, favor those which enable more active roles (than is currently typical) for non-cyborg species and for the environment.* In other words, smartphone cyborgs should do more things that can be co-done with other, non-cyborg agents, allowing others their fair share of the spotlight. Rejecting this third choreographic imperative threatens the existence of the entire cyborg species, which (like all others) depends in many complex and largely-invisible ways on other species and the environment.

And finally, following the Move of resilience, smartphone cyborgs should enlarge and augment what one might call the “physical circularity” of their actions. This would require engaging in more actions that are capable of being completed as a loop in four-dimensional embodied space, as opposed to actions like posting comments on social media (which tend to be more standalone and isolated, and less mindfully engaged with responses and holistic conclusions). As for the choreographic imperative: *favor smartphone activities that constitute the clear beginnings of more complex activities, whose beginnings, middles, and ends are firmly anchored in four-dimensional spacetime.* In other words, smartphone cyborgs should do things that can be sustained, both by their own bodies and by the bodies of other smartphone cyborgs, rather than falling into increasing bodily isolation. To reject this final choreographic imperative is to risk undermining intra-species cooperation, without which any species as such (as contrasted with the individual organisms of that species) eventually ceases to exist. This is not to say that individual entities might not continue to exist, but they would do so as non-cyborgs (by ceasing to use smartphones), which would thus destroy the smartphone cyborg species without destroying its (former) organisms.

To summarize these four choreographic imperatives, a less unnecessarily disempowering, non-zombie dancing performance of smartphone cyborg identity would involve the following four characteristics: (1a) self-care for the cyborg’s entire body, (2a) mindfulness toward the surrounding physical world, (3a) stewardship of the environment and non-cyborg species, and (4a) a narrative/historical comportment toward future-directed sustainability. By contrast, zombie performance (in general) displays the following four opposed characteristics: zombies (1b) frequently neglect almost the entirety of their bodies in deference to their hunger to consume, (2b) are not discouraged by even the deterioration or loss of large portions of their bodies, (3b) do not react differentially based on their environments (beyond the latter’s facilitation of their consumption), and (4b) have no memories of the past, hopes for the future, nor even the capacity to engage in historically-minded activities in the present. The way these latter four characteristics manifest in smartphone cyborg-zombies is that they frequently (1b1) neglect sleep, proper diet and exercise; (2b1) are indifferent to things like massive weight gain and the risk of death from texting while driving; (3b1) behave the same way whether indoors or outdoors, alone or with humans, etc.; and (4b1) focus predominantly on current stimulation and trends, with little regard for history or the distant future.

Altogether, these points recall Nietzsche’s observation that in evolutionary history, consciousness originally “constitutes a danger for the organism.” From one

perspective, smartphone cyborgs represent a regression or withdrawal from human consciousness. But from another perspective, they represent a new kind of consciousness, or at least a new simulacrum thereof. Thus, smartphone cyborgs can be interpreted as either protecting individual homo sapiens from the danger that evolved for our species, or as protecting the new individual “homo cyborgs” from the smartphone consciousness that has not yet been fully and healthfully integrated into a new smartphone cyborg species.

Given the current popularity of smartphones and the pervasively compulsive use thereof, especially by Millennials and Generation Z, the latter interpretation seems more pragmatically effective at this point, and so I have allowed it to guide my analyses here. From that strategic vantage point, I am suggesting that smartphone cyborgs can evolve themselves, using strategies such as these figuration choreographic imperatives, to self-overcome what will have been a merely temporary zombie phase—and embrace a more enabling and flourishing cyborg way of being.

References:

Benhabib, Seyla. *Situating the self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

Bo-eun, Kim, "Are no smartphone-while-walking signs effective?" *Korea Times*, 19 June, 2016

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2016/06/113_207332.html.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

Clark, Andy & David Chalmers, "The Extended Mind," *Analysis* 58(1): 1998, 7-19.

Clark, Andy. *Being There: Putting Brain, Body, and World Together Again* (Cambridge: MIT, 1998).

Douglas, Mary. *Purity and Danger* (London: Routledge, 1969).

Haraway, Donna, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology and Socialist-feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," in *Manifestly Haraway* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2016), 3-90.

Kazmi, Sophia. "Inmates at Santa Rita jail dance to the jailhouse rock," *East Bay Times*, October 16, 2007, <http://www.eastbaytimes.com/2006/10/17/inmates-at-santa-rita-jail-dance-to-the-jailhouse-rock/>.

Kim Bo-eun, "Are no smartphone-while-walking signs effective?" *Korea Times*, 19 June, 2016: http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2016/06/113_207332.html.

Magus, Kathy, "The Unaccountable Subject: Judith Butler and the Social Conditions of Intersubjective Agency," *Hypatia* 21(2): 2006, 81-103.

Schafer, Roy. *A New Language for Psycho-Analysis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 162.

Stone, Alison, "Towards a Genealogical Feminism: A Reading of Judith Butler's Political Thought," *Contemporary Political*