FAST CAPITALISM

An Interdisciplinary Journal

Volume 4 • Issue 1

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Fast Capitalism is an academic journal with a political intent. We publish reviewed scholarship and essays about the impact of rapid information and communication technologies on self, society and culture in the 21st century. We do not pretend an absolute objectivity; the work we publish is written from the vantages of viewpoint. Our authors examine how heretofore distinct social institutions, such as work and family, education and entertainment, have blurred to the point of near identity in an accelerated, post-Fordist stage of capitalism. This makes it difficult for people to shield themselves from subordination and surveillance. The working day has expanded; there is little down time anymore. People can 'office' anywhere, using laptops and cells to stay in touch. But these invasive technologies that tether us to capital and control can also help us resist these tendencies. People use the Internet as a public sphere in which they express and enlighten themselves and organize others; women, especially, manage their families and nurture children from the job site and on the road, perhaps even 'familizing' traditionally patriarchal and bureaucratic work relations; information technologies afford connection, mitigate isolation, and even make way for social movements. We are convinced that the best way to study an accelerated media culture and its various political economies and existential meanings is dialectically, with nuance, avoiding sheer condemnation and ebullient celebration. We seek to shape these new technologies and social structures in democratic ways.

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* We invite contributions on these and related issues. Some papers will stick close to the ground of daily life and politics; others will ascend the heights of theory in order to get the big picture. The work we publish is both disciplinary and interdisciplinary, bridging the social sciences and humanities. Culture and capital are keywords. We are also interested in cities, the built environment and nature, and we encourage people who theorize space to submit their work.

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'I Am the Library'

Audrey Sprenger

I Am - The Library is an ethnographic video project, [1] which documents the everyday ways a public library is used. Set in and around the Denver Central Library a few weeks before the 2008 Democratic National Convention, it is inspired by the social and oratorical work of the Reverend Jesse Jackson, a former presidential candidate who's life's work as a civil rights activist was triggered when, as a twenty-year old college student, he fought to desegregate his hometown public library.

The film takes its title and finds its rhythm in Jackson's 1971 speech, I Am - Somebody, a rallying call and response poem, which invites people to stake their political claim by simply declaring who or what they are, be their status small, flawed or tired. In making I - Am The Library, I asked over two hundred residents of the city of Denver to do the same, then asked them to speak out for their public library, as a way to make clear the very obvious but also very often overlooked social truth that the stories of our lives and, in turn, our identities, are also the story of our structural institutions, whether we believe in or regularly engage with these structural institutions or not.

I then inter-cut these faces and voices with footage shot at some of the free public events I created for the Denver Central Library between January and July of 2008. Over this relatively brief period of time I drew Denver's downtown community into a basement conference room for several very different kinds of free events: A combination cooking class and soup kitchen, where after a chef demonstrated how to make soup from scratch, it was then was distributed to any library patron who was hungry; an inter-generational jazz-poetry concert rooted in the writing and philosophies of novelist Jack Kerouac, featuring Kerouac's first musical collaborator, composer and multi-instrumentalist David Amram, as well as slam poem Panama Soweto and rising young hip-hip band The Flobots; a town hall meeting and political button making workshop with political writer John Nichols and Denver-based entrepreneur Tran Wills; and a cowboy wear and fine arts exhibit on playwright Oscar Wilde's travels to Denver in the late 19th century featuring painter and art critic Ed Adler. [2]

Like my collected chorus of voices, the purpose of these events were an attempt to push the boundaries of what a public library is and should be in the twenty-first century: A safe space and resource for the nomadic, the creative and, of course, the literary, both fictive and real.

— Audrey Sprenger

Endnotes

1. Videography and editing by Emily Crenshaw and Mary Grace Legg of the Denver-based production company Lockerpartners; still black and white photography by Ashley Vaughan.

2. Parts of these events were co-created with Chris Loffelmacher

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Revolutionary Industry and Digital Colonialism

D.E. Wittkower

Copyright-based industries have become revolutionary. That is, the machinery of production of digital wares has itself taken on the role of the revolutionary class within the political economy of digital production. The progress of capitalist production in this industry has undermined the conditions of its own possibility, not because it has driven the proletariat to rise against an oppressive system, but because the means of production, through digital media, have simultaneously made communist production possible, and the continued separation of the means of production from the laborer impracticable.

I do admit that there is also certainly a new 'revolutionary class,' at least potentially. While the question about how to characterize such a class is of great importance, my goal here is to put forth an account with an alternate starting point.[1] I hold that we need not thematically address this class, its constitution, or its nascent class-consciousness in order to give a reasonable, though sketchy, account of what has occurred, for this class has emerged as a result of a technological alteration which is itself revolutionary in a way independent of and prior to the constitution of this class as such. Whereas in Marx's view capitalism would produce a revolutionary class which would then have the overthrow of capitalism as a task before it, instead, changes in the means of production have made capitalism as an economic system impossible, and it would seem – with regard to capitalism, at least – that the only class-consciousness requisite of our new 'revolutionary class' is the realization that the revolution is underway, and that capitalism as an economic institution has been replaced by a façade of its former self, propped up only by legal constructions rather than by a firm and originary grounding in the mode of production.

Where the movement of capital was to have undermined the viability of a capitalist society, we see instead that, in the realm of traffic in digital wares, what has occurred is that the conditions for the possibility of capital have been themselves undermined. This, technically, is not a revolution at all, but rather the end of a kind of political-economic "bubble." Nevertheless, as this does not call merely for a market correction, but instead, a socioeconomic correction, the experience which we are undergoing will be one of a revolutionary character, for while the conditions for the possibility of capitalism have been here undermined, there is yet the ongoing attempt to re-create them through a return to primitive accumulation, and, along with it, an attempt to return to a feudal model. The revolution to come, in other words, is the revolt against feudalism, and for this we will, indeed, need a formulation of the emergent revolutionary class, and it will need to attain its class-consciousness. My purpose here, however, is to describe in its origin and effects the 'revolution' – more properly, again, 'correction' – already underway, independent of this class.

Digital Means of Production

To make this case, I will begin with Marx's Law of the Tendency of the Rate of Profit to Fall, wherein he held that as relative surplus value continued to rise through consolidation, there would be a decrease in the ratio of variable capital to constant capital, which would quite directly imply a decrease in the ratio of profit, a crisis of realization (realization, in this context, being the conversion of the surplus value, created by variable capital, into exchange value within the market), and an increase both in unemployment and in the revolutionary class. He noted

a number of counteracting forces, the most important for our purposes being the cheapening of the elements of constant capital.

The absolute decrease in variable capital (i.e., the joblessness produced through an ever greater increase of productivity) which was to have brought about the revolutionary moment, was to occur through the relative decrease in variable capital, which is to say, the increased productivity of the worker which accompanies improved machinery, division of labor, and so forth. However, as this process continues, constant capital itself requires less labor-power to produce, and thus the technological means of production undergo the same general cheapening that the price of labour on the market undergoes. After all, if there is a decrease in the rate of profit, this can mean only that each produced item represents an ever smaller amount of reified labor, including raw materials, and most importantly, machinery. As Marx summarized,

> The value of the worked-up cotton has not grown in the same proportion as its mass . . . [and] the same applies to machinery and other fixed capital. In short, the same development which increases the mass of the constant capital in relation to the variable reduces the value of its elements as a result of the increased productivity of labour, and therefore prevents the value of constant capital, although it continually increases, from increasing at the same rate as its material volume. (Marx 1998:234)

Thus, depending on the rate of cheapening and the level of efficiency of means of production within a particular industry, it may be that there is, after all, no relative decrease of variable capital, or possibly even a relative increase of variable capital, concomitant with absolute decrease of both variable and constant capital per commodity produced. If the means of production cheapen alongside variable capital, then, instead of describing the effect as a falling employment rate and therefore a falling rate of profit, we could better describe the effect as an increase in productive power which has no necessary absolute loss of either employment or rate of profit. Further, without this loss of employment or rate of profit, the crisis of realization need never come about, since even the laborer herself will actually be able to purchase the goods brought to market.

This absolute decrease in the labor-value of constant capital per commodity produced, running in parallel with a similar increase in productivity in the realm of variable capital, thus seems to avert a possible crisis of capital; this being one of the reasons why the late Marx – here, much more a cool-headed economist than a Young Hegelian revolutionary – made only the very weak claim implied in his titling the principle here as 'the law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall.' However, we must take care to look behind the mask of this deus ex machina, for that process which brings an absolute decrease in constant capital in the commodities of a given industry not only restores the viability of consolidated corporations operating in that industry, but also makes the possession of the means of production of that industry ever closer to the grasp of the common wage-earner. The process of the absolute decrease of constant capital, seemingly inevitable for the reasons described above, if unfettered, brings the means of production within the reach of common laborers, at which point they are able to benefit from the use of their own labor-power rather than being forced to bring it to the marketplace, thereby undermining one of the conditions necessary for industrial capital. This possibility was not, as far as I can determine, ever addressed by Marx.[2] The most obvious explanation for this is that the cheapening of machinery which would be necessary to make this a revolutionary effect could not have been foreseen at that time; he would have to have been a mystic or a madman to take seriously the possibility that industrial machinery would be so cheapened that a wage laborer would be able to easily purchase manufacturing capabilities sufficient to compete with capitalist magnates. This possibility has, however, been realized, albeit in a limited scope.

As computational devices have become smaller, more reliable, and more powerful, there has been a significant decline in the absolute constant capital that they represent. At the same time, these machines have been able to perform ever more complex operations in an ever smaller and more manageable time frame, and there has been a great increase in capital investment in the creation of ever more complex and effective operational commands. That is to say, as hardware has improved and cheapened, software has been able to represent a proportionally greater capital investment, and it is the peculiar structure of software that provides the core of the changes I mean to address here.

Digital Goods and Digital Reproduction

Contemporary information technologies are remarkable in that any information entered can be stored and

reproduced with absolute fidelity. Value can be preserved with minimal means of production – access to the information along with available storage space – and with negligible labor. This means, of course, that there is, practically speaking, virtually no valorization at all in the production of any particular iteration of a file or program, although there may have been labor required to order the information in a manner having use-value, to make this information accessible to information technology, and so forth. Furthermore, this is true of digital files of any kind, whether the idea is stated in a directly executable form or not, that is, whether the digital file is a piece of software or a document. (For this reason, I will not differentiate in the following between these kinds of digital files. Both software and documents are similarly losslessly replicable effectively without marginal cost, and, thus, both are equally subject to the analysis here.) The production and reproduction of digital files is in this way akin to the production and reproduction of ideas, excepting that digital files may be of a level of complexity and/or length greater than the human platform can support.

More specifically, digital files are akin to ideas in that, as Thomas Jefferson famously stated, "he who receives an idea from me, receives instruction himself without lessening mine; as he who lights his taper at mine, receives light without darkening me" ([1813] 2000). Given the minimal means of production – having an input of appropriate format in order to allow processing, such as a reasonable person speaking or signing our mother tongue; being of sound mind; not being asleep or distracted or so forth – the reproduction of an idea from an outside source is not only usually accomplished with little effort, but furthermore is actually necessary if any use-value is to be found in that information at all. Digital files are also such that their reproduction is a necessary means for and an integral part of their consumption.[3]

Certain economically valuable expressions have been encouraged due to the great value of the labour-power expended in their initial production and the vanishingly small exchange value of the product thereby produced. The encouragement of this production, through the artificial creation of governmentally enforced scarcity, allowed for the production of ideas which would have little or no use-value to the producer, and, thus, allowed for the production of intellectual commodities, ideas produced for sale rather than personal use, either in the form of a product, such as a book or album, or in the form of machinery (i.e., software).

Now that the means of production of such commodities are greatly and increasingly within public hands due to digital technologies, it has become possible to produce ideas for personal use that are also of value on an industrial scale – that is, as means of production become ever more available, ever more industrial-grade ideas are created for use rather than exchange. Here, if left to their own devices, so to speak, such ideas tend to be shared, rather in the form of a conversation. These non-material means of production, having been invented for personal use, have their reproducibility no longer as a discouragement to their creation, but rather as an accidental bounty, which tends to be given away freely within the community of such unincorporated producers. At this stage in its development, the means of industrial production become themselves revolutionary, bringing about a spontaneous communist economy.

Where means of production are not publicly available, industries must be assured of the potential profitability of any socially beneficial activities we might expect them to perform, but where the public has free access to the means of production the public no longer needs to encourage corporate interests to produce in its stead. It is clearly no longer necessary for our society to guarantee the profitability of the production of a word processor, a web browser, or even an operating system, for fine examples of such machinery may be, and have been, produced by the public without commodification. Similarly, it has now become quite easy and ever more commonplace for people to compose, produce and distribute music and video without commodification, and without governmentally enforced monopoly over the works thus created, which monopoly, regardless, seems to present only an indirect and sometimes almost inconsequential incentive to artists themselves, given the extent to which the current system is biased in favor of distributors rather than artists.[4] Digital technologies have made composition and production of such media considerably easier in any number of ways, from digital cameras and video cameras to software tools. In terms of promotion and distribution, peer-to-peer networks are very efficient distribution networks, and web pages can easily serve the function of promotion, advertisement and distribution, as in for example discussion forums, blogs and personal web pages serving as gateways to other sites and/or materials, content specific artist-operated sites, portals open to direct submission by the public, and portals which make free and public domain works available which might otherwise be difficult or impossible to obtain.

From Wares to Warez

Formerly, it had been easy to institute property rights over objects which had no natural affinity for them –

ideas, as we have mentioned, are immediately transferable and cannot be seized nor fenced-off once expressed and in this way are quite resistant to the possibility of holding effective property rights. This had been a simple matter only because the cases in which property rights were extended over ideas whose use required significant capital investment (presses, prototypes). Thus, the only parties capable of infringement of a meaningful kind were those who engaged in large-scale production, and were thus few in number, and conspicuous in both manufacture and distribution. With the cheapening and subsequent increasing availability of means of production the number of parties capable of infringement grew explosively, now virtually pervading the public sphere. Small-scale infringement became practical, and the line between significant infringement and insignificant "fair use" has become practically meaningless, for sufficiently widespread "fair use" when given access to the means of production becomes, in effect, a highly distributed large-scale system of production, as is the case in peer-to-peer networks such as Gnutella or KaZaA, or even merely in the collective effect of pervasive and commonplace exchange of digital products in person.[5]

Without centralized high-profile producers, and without the need of a centralized large-scale distribution system – for the exchange of non-commodified or de-commodified wares requires neither that they be advertised nor that they be made available for sale – effective monitoring of infringement becomes impracticable. There is no longer the possibility of identifying the single or small number of parties guilty of infringement; instead, there is a huge number of parties which are each responsible for an inconsequential degree of infringement, but which taken together nevertheless threaten the viability of corporations trading in such goods.

As discussed in the previous section, with the development of sufficiently advanced digital technologies the means of production have become publicly available, spawning a spontaneous communist economy that seems able to motivate socially necessary labor within this sphere of production without dependence upon capitalist commodification of goods. While this economy does trade in de-commodified wares – that is, wares initially produced from a profit motive, but redistributed, as warez, without a profit motive – the production of non-commodified wares in open-source communities continues to expand, both by means of the creation of goods for use-value and in the move from a commodity-market model of software production into a service-economy model of production.

These communist and service-based economies, furthermore, are in competition with the holdovers from these industries' capitalist past. Thus, we have a rather odd form of class warfare taking place: setting the predominantly middle-class computer-savvy masses, not against the capitalist or upper class, but against large national and multinational corporations themselves. The digital proletariat seeks to seize the remaining means of digital production not yet in their hands and to use these means to produce freely made goods to serve as a replacement for those produced by industrial capitalists. The capitalist holdovers seek to wrest productive power from the public and generally to ensure that as little as possible is available for free, but that as much as possible must be obtained through the marketplace.

Unable to act effectively against infringement, capitalist holdovers in revolutionary industries can hope to control the flood only through fear and violence. The MPAA and RIAA have taken legal action under the DMCA against academic researchers,[6] persons running personal web pages,[7] and private citizens.[8] Additionally, they have threatened to hold corporations accountable for the non-business related actions of their employees,[9]to hold employees accountable for the actions of their employers,[10] to hold commercial ISPs accountable for the actions of their customers, to hold universities accountable for the actions of faculty and students, and to hold parents accountable for the actions of their children.[11] They have also begun to pressure colleges and universities to monitor students on behalf of the media industries,[12] and to themselves prevent and punish copyright infringement on campus.[13] The MPAA senior vice president of worldwide anti-piracy, Ken Jacobson, accounted for these actions by explaining that "what we're trying to do is educate the population about what is appropriate, both from an ethical standpoint and from a legal standpoint" (Bowman 2001).

Modern-Primitive Accumulation

Even if the public interest were best served by preserving intellectual property rights in these cases, the public interest is certainly not served by such widespread and punitive "education" about "what is appropriate." These actions are not well described as education, but are much better characterized as a process of deliberate and systematic crippling of the productive powers of the public. This is nothing but a return to primitive accumulation as a desperate attempt to prop up a system that the movement of capital no longer reinforces.

Marx describes primitive accumulation as the metaphorical original sin of capitalism; it is the nonmarket-based seizure of the means of production that forced labourers to sell their labour-power on the market rather than acting as producers themselves. That was necessary in order to put the capitalist system in place, after which time it is able to continue to run as a self-supporting system. As Marx explains,

> The capitalist system presupposes the complete separation of the labourers from all property in the means by which they can realise their labour. As soon as capitalist production is once on its own legs, it not only maintains this separation, but reproduces it on a continually extending scale. The process, therefore, that clears the way for the capitalist system, can be none other than the process which takes away from the labourer the possession of his means of production . . . The so-called primitive accumulation, therefore, is nothing else than the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production. (Marx 1996: 705-6)

The capitalist holdovers in revolutionary industries must return to something like primitive accumulation. The means of production having come back into the hands of laborers though the process already described, capitalism has had its legs knocked out from under it by industrial production itself, this being, indeed, the reason why such industries can properly be called themselves revolutionary. In order to re-create this original sin, necessary for capitalist production to be a self-supporting system, those who seek to commodify intellectual products must separate laborers from their newly gained productive powers.

This, however, cannot in this case be accomplished by straightforward primitive accumulation, for the capitalist holdovers seek to sell intellectual products, which by their very nature, as we have already discussed, contain within them the means of their own reproduction. The solution sought is then the next best thing: to attempt to ensure that the productive employment of the means of production that can no longer be kept from laborers is as limited as possible, and that the products of this productive employment cannot serve the same functions as the commodified products of corporate manufacturing, thus maintaining an artificial dependency upon capitalist production of intellectual goods. This is achieved by means of what Michael Perelman calls advanced accumulation (1998:78; 2002:45), wherein the public is forced to pay for the privatization of public goods, and by means of a kind of systematic colonization of information itself, wherein an arbitrary and exclusionary system of laws ensures that only large corporations are allowed to fully utilize the means of production commonly available to most members of society.

Even these methods, however, will not make capitalist production of intellectual products again possible, for where industry has itself become revolutionary, it seems that a capitalist system becomes impossible. As the term was defined at the outset, a revolutionary industry is an industry that, through a radical cheapening of machinery, has made the means of production available to the laborer, and which has a vanishing small marginal cost in the production of its wares. Under these conditions, communist production has flourished and is currently in open competition with capitalist holdovers within the industry. The force of capital has shifted to support communist models of production, and capitalism only remains possible through legislative measures. The only recourse which the capitalist holdovers have available – other than allowing progress to occur peacefully – is to return to a variety of feudalism,[14] where laborers have access to the means of production, but must hand over all their work to the lords of the information industries, and must obtain all their digital goods, not from one another in a free exchange, but always and only through the mediation of corporate masters, who can thus set arbitrary and exploitative prices.

Three Ways of Being-Against Technology

Cultural industrialists oppose the change implied by and contained within the form of digital technologies in three primary ways: (1) advanced accumulation, (2) systematic colonization, and (3) the attempt to bring about informational feudalism. Michael Perelman defines advanced accumulation in contrast to primitive accumulation, stating that

> Rather than directly expropriating physical means of production, advanced accumulation is more indirect. It entails the marshalling of public resources to concentrate informational powers in the hands of great corporations or elite individuals. The public resources might be information proper or the means of conveying information, such as the communications spectrum. (Perelman 1998: 78)

Within the realm of patent law – his primary concern – Perelman gives a striking and very clear example of advanced

> accumulation soon after introducing the term.
>
> With regard to pharmaceutical companies, he points out that they patent information obtained through university research, then sell a product based on this research, which, in the case of a successful product, he elsewhere estimates to generate about a million dollars in sales per day (Perelman 2002:195). Then, "When challenged [regarding pricing], the corporation will inevitably respond by claiming the need to recoup the expenses of its research, even though public research frequently forms the foundation for much vaunted intellectual property rights," (1998:80) clearly an ingenious claim when we consider for example, as he points out elsewhere, that "in 1992, the industry spent $1 billion more on promotion of its drugs than on research and development" (2002:131).

He continues,

> In a rather spectacular case, federally funded research was used to map the genetic structure of human beings. Private companies were then permitted to patent these genes. Those that control this valuable information then have the gall to call upon the full powers of the state to protect their intellectual property rights to human genetic material. (1998:80)

The case is similar with regard to copyright. Copyrighted material is protected at public expense, the cost of which, now that the means of production are publicly available, is already great and will be increasingly greater. Copyright laws use the time and energy of our elected representatives, and the enforcement of these laws clogs our courts and are conducted in large part at government expense, both domestic [15] and foreign. [16]

The "copyright bargain" is, furthermore, no longer a bargain at all, but is rather a seizure, for not only does the public pay to provide and protect the artificial monopolies of intellectual property capitalist industrialists, but the public also pays for these industrialists to bring about legislation and prosecution which prevents the public from free and fair use of the materials thus provided. This process at its base is the transformation of the public domain into capital, both through the use of public funding for private interests and through the privatization of the commons which was supposed to have been given back to the public as the public's end of the bargain. Advanced accumulation takes from us economic and personal independence and gives us Independence Day in its place.

Re-Colonization

Furthermore, there is a process of systematic colonization of information itself. In the systematic colonization of information – a process that overlaps to a significant extent with advanced accumulation in terms of both methods and goals – individuals are kept from the full and free use of the means of production already in their hands. In order to outline how this is done in the realm of information, we will begin by looking at the idea of systematic colonization in a conventional sense.

Marx, in his discussion of E.G. Wakefield's England and America, states that

> We have seen that the expropriation of the mass of the people from the soil forms the basis of the capitalist mode of production. The essence of a free colony, on the contrary, consists in this – that the bulk of the soil is still public property, and every settler on it therefore can turn part of it into his private property and individual means of production, without hindering the later settlers in the same operation. (Marx 1996:755)

This presents a problem for the capitalist, for workers no longer divorced from the means of production cannot be pressed into labor. But Wakefield has a solution:

> How, then, to heal the anti-capitalistic cancer of the colonies? . . . Let the Government put upon the virgin soil an artificial price, independent of the law of supply and demand, a price that compels the immigrant to work a long time for wages before he can earn enough money to buy land, and turn himself into an independent peasant. . . . This is the great secret of 'systematic colonization.' (Marx 1996:758-9)

But as Marx points out, "this 'sufficient price for the land' is nothing but a euphemistic circumlocution for the ransom which the laborer pays to the capitalist for leave to retire from the wage-labor market to the land" (1996: 759).

Industries based on or around computers, especially the software industry, are in this way akin to empires. They must struggle in order to ensure that colonists who find themselves surrounded by free and available means of production do not use these means for their own subsistence and independence, but rather to support the motherland.

The digital consumer is surrounded by rich and arable land. Software may be mined for ore, out of which new competing products may be made. Music may serve as not merely a product to be consumed, but seeds may be saved which can be cultivated into new and attractive varietals. The very look and feel of objects of our digital life, whether .html, .mp3, .mpg, or .exe, may inspire new creations.

In order to keep the production of digital objects from obtaining independence from commodification and from the capitalist motherland, corporate peddlers of intellectual property must ensure that colonists in digital lands are largely and for the most part unable to use the seemingly inexhaustible riches surrounding them to become independent producers – excepting if they should obtain sufficient capital to buy their way in. What is the price in this case? It is not a set amount, but the minimum is likely the amount required to acquit oneself of a spurious charge from a corporation employing a legal team. The maximum is 150,000 USD per infringing work, plus actual damages and lost profit projections.

Since the minimum price is unacceptably high for private individuals as well as small businesses, the safest bet is to simply pay the fees, even on spurious copyright and patent claims. The other option – and the one followed by top tech companies – is to amass a portfolio of intellectual property claims (spurious or not) that can be used to file counter-suits, forcing reasonable licensing agreements.[17]

Thus, the systematic colonization of information is more insidious than the conventional variety, for the price it sets for becoming a producer is so high as to prevent anybody from paying it who has not already become part of the analogical motherland, (i.e., who is not already engaged in capitalistic production of intellectual property and the processes of advanced accumulation) systematic colonization, and information feudalization which are required to make capitalistic production possible after industry has itself become revolutionary. However, systematic colonization of information can be avoided in a way that the conventional variety cannot, for it is not possible to produce land out of whole cloth, so to speak, but it is yet possible to produce digital objects without being subject to the claims of intellectual property.

The systematic colonization of information is being accomplished through (a) closed-sourcing, (b) governmentally guaranteed encryption, (c) licensing, and (d) the assumption of copyright. Through these means the digital colonist, while she cannot be separated from her land, is kept as much as possible from mining it, from trading or selling it, and from sustainably farming it.[18]

(a) Through closed-sourcing we colonists are prevented from improving upon that which we have purchased,[19] we are kept from a means of learning from the achievements and failures of others, and we are denied a valuable educational tool that would otherwise aid us in learning the tools of commerce. Closed-sourcing prevents us from free use of information that we have obtained in the marketplace; information that in some cases has been taken from the public domain.[20]

(b) Through encryption we colonists are denied access to information which we have legally obtained, thus making free use of proprietary and some non-proprietary information not only illegal, as it is under closed-sourcing, but actually impossible. Encryption of commodities, however, can always be circumvented, as I already noted above, for we can always tap into the data flow at the point of display or use. In order to further prevent us from use of these materials, encryption has been granted a legal status (Cf. DMCA anti-circumvention provision, U.S.C Sec. 1201(a)) that criminalizes access to encrypted information, thereby legally denying us not only creative use of but also mere access to information in our possession, such that we do not have the opportunity to do wrong, for under this legal protection of encryption, we may be cut off from even the intended use of products purchased if this use requires circumvention (as used to be the case for Linux users who wished to view a DVD – no CSS-licensed DVD software was available until as late as 2001 (Linux Online 2001), leading to the famous Jon Lech Johansen DeCSS case (Stecklow 2005) – and as is arguably the case now with iTunes-purchased DRM restricted content). Again, the trend in these cases of overprotection is to criminalize fair use rather than risk an erosion of corporate control of consumer activities, thereby removing from the public not only free use of purchased proprietary information, but also in some cases even public domain, copyright free, and non-proprietary information.

(c) Through licensing we colonists are prevented from saving seeds from our harvest for replanting, both literally[21] and figuratively. We can be prevented from use of our legally purchased product to make further copies, we can be prevented from lending our copy to friends and relatives, and we can be prevented accessing our copy from more than one location.[22] Through licensing we are stripped of ownership of digital objects, and, placed in the legal status of renter, subject to all manner of abuses and unfair contractual requirements.[23]

(d) Finally, through the assumption of copyright – that material is assumed to be copyrighted over its maximum term without notice to or registration with any centralized database – we colonists are prevented from the use of vast amounts of material that lies entirely fallow; [24] unoccupied and unused resources which the empire would rather fall to decay than be used by independent producers.[25] As Lessig asks rhetorically,

"But can't you just restore the film, distribute it, and then pay the copyright owner when she shows up?" Sure, if you want

> to commit a felony. And even if you're not worried about committing a felony, when she does show up, she'll have the right to sue you for all the profits you have made. So, if you're successful, you can be fairly confident you'll be getting a call from someone's lawyer. And if you're not successful, you won't make enough to cover the costs of your own lawyer. Either way, you have to talk to a lawyer. And as is too often the case, saying you have to talk to a lawyer is the same as saying you won't make any money. (2004:224)

Of course, if one does not even attempt to make a profit, one may still be committing a felony, [26] and is still liable for damages to the copyright holder, and one will likely be, in the end, just in a worse situation if the lawyers should arrive.

Through these four primary avenues, and in other ways less important and too numerous to discuss in detail, the capitalist holdovers have put legal barriers in the way of the use of the digital bounty all around us. The effect is the systematic colonization of information itself: only corporations and economically elite individuals are able to pay the prices required in order to freely put information to use. Only they can afford the expense of a lawsuit, and we mere colonists cannot fight even a spurious and unjust claim of infringement without devastating loss of property and livelihood. Only they can afford to pay the absurd and exclusionary fees attached to legal use of materials, fees that ensure that we colonists cannot ourselves become producers.[27] Furthermore, only they can pay the legislative equivalent of the poll tax: the immense amount of money that must be spent in most cases in order to get legislation on the table, and unless there is first a public uprising, we colonists would certainly be unable to marshal the resources to counterbalance the capital investments of intellectual property corporations in both lobbying and campaign contributions, if we should wish to pass legislation limiting the artificial monopolies of the intellectual property empire.

Informational Feudalism

As we have already noted, systematic colonization of information is in a way more insidious than systematic colonization of a conventional sort, for it sets the price of free use too high for common laborers. It must do this, for its industry has become revolutionary, and any common laborer can now produce goods on an industrial level; goods which can most certainly rival those of corporate capitalistic manufacture in terms both of quality and quantity, and most assuredly in terms of price. The overall end goal of this variety of systematic colonization is not then to ensure that an orderly and reasonable capitalist economy is created, for fair capitalist competition already brought about the spontaneous communist society that this systematic colonization is intended to disrupt. The overall end goal is instead to bring about a kind of feudalism, for it must to the greatest extent possible transform laborers into mere serfs, for in revolutionary industries a creative and industrious laborer can compete with any magnate.

As Lessig explains his version of this parallel,

> Under feudalism, not only was property held by a relatively small number of individuals and entities. And not only were the rights that ran with that property powerful and extensive. But the feudal system had a strong interest in assuring that property holders within that system not weaken feudalism by liberating people or property within their control to the free market. Feudalism depended upon maximum control. (2004: 267)

Lessig is concerned here with the hostility not merely towards those who object to the strong property rights granted over intellectual property but also towards intellectual property rights holders who wish to release their own work into the public domain. This latter form of hostility is exemplified by U.S. Patent and Trademark Office acting director of international relations Lois Boland, who stated that "open-source software runs counter to the mission of WIPO, which is to promote intellectual-property rights," and that "to hold a meeting which has as its purpose to disclaim or waive such rights seems to us to be contrary to the goals of WIPO." (Lessig 2004: 265)[28]. This hostility cannot be explained by a commitment to property rights, for as Lessig points out,

> even if one believed that the purpose of WIPO was to maximize intellectual property rights, in our tradition, intellectual property rights are held by individuals and corporations. They get to decide what to do with those rights because, again, they are their rights. If they want to "waive" or "disclaim" their rights, that is, within our tradition, totally appropriate. (2004:266)

This hostility towards any broadening of the public domain does indeed go beyond advanced accumulation

and systematic colonization, but does not itself constitute informational feudalism. In addition we need to consider contemporary analogs of three other aspects of traditional feudalism: (1) the way in which labor power is the property of the land rather than of the laborer (as is the case in capitalism) or of other humans (as is the case in slavery), (2) the way in which guild structures ensure that laborers are unable to wield their productive power as individuals, and (3) the overall structure within this bipartite system which amounts to an unchanging caste system determining the ability to freely use the means of production which are, however, in the possession of all.

In the feudal economy, land is given over to nobles who extract a tribute from those who work and live upon the land. Thus, "Like tribal and communal ownership, it is based again on a community; but the directly producing class standing over against it is not, as in the case of the ancient community, the slaves, but the enserfed small peasantry" (Marx 1932). However, here the means of production assert a kind of dominance over the community for "The serf is the adjunct of the land. Likewise, the lord of an entailed estate, the first-born son, belongs to the land. It inherits him" (Marx 1959). Further,

> This feudal system of land ownership had its counterpart in the towns in the shape of corporative property, the feudal organization of trades. . . . The gradually accumulated small capital of individual craftsmen and their stable numbers, as against the growing population, evolved the relation of journeyman and apprentice, which brought into being in the towns a hierarchy similar to that in the country. (Marx 1932)

In the informational feudalism which the capitalist holdover seeks to bring about there is no clear analog to this bipartite town/country division, but our position as laborers in informational economies takes on aspects of both serfdom and guild membership, and our position as consumers takes on aspects of those freemen who are neither serfs nor guilded, with the exception, of course, that we have means of subsistence not altogether dependent upon informational economies.

In informational feudalism, we would be born serfs. Born onto lands already owned by others, we would be able to use our productive force only insofar as we pay tribute to the noble landowners. We could write only insofar as we pay for Microsoft Word, and insofar as we pay for the updates required by the updates of our operating systems, which are in turn required for our continued compatibility with those who have already updated their software. Furthermore, our consumption would be limited to those provided by these lords; we could listen to music and watch movies only by paying tribute to labels and studios. We would be born and live out our lives upon cultural soil already and always ever owned by the few and the powerful.

In order to profit from our productive powers to create goods, we would have to join guilds. To publish we would have to prove our worth to publishing houses and agree to their terms. To record and release music, we would have to join a label, for only they would be able to convince (i.e. pay in cash or kind) the radio conglomerates to play our music. To film and release video, we would have to sell ourselves over to the interests of studios or networks, for only they can withstand a charge of infringement. To create software or games, we would have to become a part of a large software company, for only they can stockpile the patents needed in order to negotiate release of applications. In each case, the guild keeps not only the greater part of the profits, but usually also keeps the majority of ownership rights over our products.

Others are then born into our products, which we cannot allow them free use of, for our guilds and lords retain ownership of them. Thus, the world which the copyright warriors wish to bring about is not only feudalistic in that it depends upon suppression of making informational goods freely available, but also in that it would establish an unchanging caste system in which only the few could ever freely use resources in the possession of all, and in which the many can only ever use the means in their possession by virtue of their fealty to the few, thereby reducing us to serfs belonging to the very lands we work.

As Lessig says, "the question now is whether [information society] will be free or feudal," just as Roger Garaudy wrote in 1969, when he asked whether digital technologies will "bring about renewed alienation in a technocratic form of totalitarianism, or an unprecedented liberation of the creative potential in man, in each and every human being" (1970:11). This is a question that we have the responsibility and privilege to answer. A complication which we must consider, in framing this question, is that however rhetorically effective and descriptively compelling they may or may not be as metaphors and analogies, ultimately 'feudalism' and 'serfdom' insufficient descriptions of our emerging relation to productive forces.

G.A. Cohen describes "ownership positions of immediate producers" as follows: the serf owns some of his labor power and some of the means of production; the proletarian owns all of his labor power and none of the means of production; an independent producer owns all of both; and a slave owns none of either (1978:65). Cohen

then goes on to describe the different combinations which do not appear in the standard set, the first of which – (5): he who owns none of his labour power but all of the means of production – Cohen claims "depicts an incoherent set of rights. For if X is the sole owner of all the means of production he uses . . . he is entitled to use them without the direction or interference of another person. Yet (5) also states that X has no authority whatsoever over the disposition of his own labor power" (1978:66). Surely Cohen is right in claiming that this situation is incoherent, and yet in some important aspects this seems to be the regulative ideal for the consumer under informational feudalism. We see this more clearly in his ongoing discussion:

> (5) is the mirror image of the proletarian . . . The proletarian may do anything he wishes with his labour power, short of violating the general laws of society, and nothing may be done with it without his contractual consent. He may not, of course, work with whatever means of production he chooses, but this follows from the exclusion of illegal behaviour in general. For parity, the person described in (5) should, in virtue of his supposed ownership of means of production, be able to do whatever he wishes with them within the law, yet this is excluded by his being forbidden to work with them as he wills, which is not a general law, but a legal feature of his particular situation. (1978:66)

Today, of course, there is a law which forbids from doing "whatever we wish" with the intellectual goods we purchase, and yet it is still the case that we own copies of mp3s, DVDs and applications. And, further, with digital objects it is impossible for us to own the digital consumer object without also always already owning the means of production of it. For these reasons, I hold that it is more appropriate to say of our digital serfdom that, with regard only to our lives in relation to intellectual goods, that intellectual property maximalism moves us towards a situation wherein we could be appropriately said to own all the means of production, and yet not own our labour-power with relation to them; a kind of regional approximation of (5) above. We might describe this situation as the ideal consumer: the ideal consumer has access to the means of production, and yet is unable to do anything with them, and therefore must always purchase in order to consume. Again, a chief example here is the farmer who has every opportunity, but not the legal right, to save seed from harvest to replant; we are prevented from becoming independent producers, not because we have no access to, or cannot afford the means of production, but simply because we are legally prevented from using it, either directly through intellectual property rights, or indirectly through the fear of litigation and collusion of industrial producers.[29]

Thus, abandoned by capital, capitalists have used laws intended to bind their hands in order to prohibit productive forces from further development. In doing so, they have appropriated the functionaries of the governments, both domestic and foreign, in order to keep wage-laborers from the productive use of the means of production now within their hands. Through advanced accumulation, they rob the commons at public expense. Through systematic colonization, they prevent our use of that which has been taken from the commons. Together, these work to bring about informational feudalism, in which our lives are lived on their property, and we have no choice but to consume what they provide at the prices they set, to produce only by their fiat, and to sign our own work over to them if this work is ever to reach the public.

This program has not yet been completed, and even if it were completed, it would still only be further grist in the mill of history, which, if we sign on to some version of technological determinism, would progress inevitably away both from capitalism and from its regressive neofeudal stopgap as well, towards a future of communal, bazaar-model intellectual production. However, regardless of our views on determinism, this future is already with us in at least an inchoate form – the inchoate communistic economy, spontaneously arisen from the public availability of the means of production, which is embodied within the open source movement and p2p networks. We have yet an opportunity to bring the future sooner rather than later, and with less upheaval now than in the future when feudalism may have gained sway despite the resistance of the means of production themselves. We must resist; we must riot in the online streets, and we must work our digital plowshares into swords. We must rip, we must mix, and we must burn.

Endnotes

1. Despite this, I will nevertheless have to refer to this class in the following. In order to avoid involvement in debate about its proper name or characterization, I will use the dummy-term "digital proletariat," or, later, "we colonists."

2. Although G.A. Cohen is right to assert that, for Marx, the breakdown of capitalism itself was insufficient to

establish socialism or communism unless a sufficient level of technological development had been first attained. As Cohen summarizes:

> Believing that a developed technology was an essential precondition of socialist success, Marx would be pessimistic about attempts to 'build socialism' from a baseline of comparative scarcity and industrial immaturity. But since he thought high technology was not only necessary but also sufficient for socialism, and that capitalism would certainly generate that technology, his final position was optimistic. (Cohen 1978:206)

Please do note, however, that this claim that "high technology" is "sufficient" for socialism is still not the claim that I will make here: that digital information technology is not merely sufficient but actually effective – actively revolutionary in important ways – in bringing about communistic production within its own, admittedly limited sphere.

3. It has been said that for this reason, any attempt to protect digital information from copying must necessarily fail. The argument is that the digital information must be decrypted at some point, for it is used in a non-encrypted form. No matter how complex the system of protection, it will always be possible to tap into the data stream at the point of display or use. A nice example of the way in which wares can exploit this point of contact is presented by programs such as ourTunes (http://ourtunes.sourceforge.net/) and Blue Coconut (http://husk.org/apps/blue_coconut/), which connect at the user-end to iTunes' music sharing function, allowing a user to download a shared file through iTunes, despite the fact that iTunes itself, which provides the streaming of the music file, is specifically designed to prevent such downloading.

A particularly dramatic example is provided by MyTunes, a program which performed this same circumventive function. As John Borland reported,

> as some predicted, the popular software has all but vanished from the Net, and its programmer's sites have gone dark. But this time, it's not the doing of an angry record industry or a conflict-averse Apple. Trinity College sophomore Bill Zeller, who wrote the program in less than two weeks of off-time coding last year, says he simply lost the source code in a catastrophic computer crash.
>
> "I was about to release the second version, when I lost everything," Zeller said. "I may put it back online, but there won't be any updates. I don't want to rewrite it." (Borland 2004)

The very fact that a college student can circumvent corporation-produced DRM systems in his spare time, with a level of commitment as minimal as we see in his comments here, supports the basic intuition that the project of preventing access through the technical means of closed-sourcing, encryption, and DRM is essentially doomed.

4. For example, Courtney Love argues very effectively that even a band with a million-dollar advance, a %20 royalty rate, which sells a million copies of their album, nevertheless "might as well be working at a 7-Eleven." She introduces this example by asking rhetorically, "What is piracy? Piracy is the act of stealing an artist's work without any intention of paying for it. I'm not talking about Napster-type software. I'm talking about major label recording contracts." (2000) Love then goes on to explain how musicians have been legally denied ownership, for perpetuity, of the copyright for their music via the Satellite Home Viewing Act of 1999, wherein such creative works were reclassified as 'works for hire,' a designation which does not otherwise cover creative or original works.

5. The practical similarity between the online exchange and the personal exchange of digital files is recognized in references to the "sneakernet." The term originated with the observation that where it is impossible or imprudent to exchange such materials on the internet, one can always put on one's sneakers and exchange the files in person; that is, over the "sneakernet."

6. Dr. Edward Felten, after receiving a threatening letter, was moved to decline to present an academic paper that used research garnered from a public challenge funded by the Secure Digital Music Initiative. As he explained,

> On behalf of the authors of the paper "Reading Between the Lines: Lessons from the SDMI Challenge," I am disappointed to tell you that we will not be presenting our paper today. Our paper was submitted via the normal academic peer-review process. The reviewers, who were chosen for their scientific reputations and credentials, enthusiastically recommended the paper for publication, due to their judgment of the paper's scientific merit. Nevertheless, the Recording Industry Association of America, the SDMI Foundation, and the Verance Corporation threatened to bring a lawsuit if we proceeded with our presentation or the publication of our paper. Threats were made against the authors, against the conference organizers, and against their respective employers. Litigation is costly, time-consuming, and uncertain, regardless of the merits of the other side's case. Ultimately we, the authors, reached a collective decision not to expose ourselves, our employers, and the conference organizers to litigation at this time. (Felten 2001)

Full text of Dr. Felten's letter, along with the threatening letter from The Secure Digital Music Initiative (SDMI), a music industry organization, is available at http://cryptome.org/sdmi-attack.htm. Full text of the paper the authors chose not to present is available at that site, or at http://www.usenix.org/publications/library/proceedings/sec01/craver.pdf

7. For example, Dave Touretzky's home page, available at http://www-2.cs.cmu.edu/~dst/. The letter reads, in part,

> We have received information that you are unlawfully offering product at the above referenced web site. We have notified your ISP of the unlawful nature of this web site and have asked for its immediate removal. Our letter to your ISP is set forth below for your reference. (Motion Picture Association of America 2001)

The appended letter to the ISP, in this case, Carnegie-Mellon University, reads in part

> The district court's ruling makes clear that by providing DeCSS, the above referenced Internet site violates the DMCA. This conduct may also violate the laws of other countries, international law, and/or treaty obligations.
>
> We therefore demand that you take appropriate steps to cause the immediate removal of DeCSS from the above identified Internet site, along with such other actions as may be necessary or appropriate to suspend this illegal activity. Failure to comply with this measure will subject you to liability as described above.
>
> We also request that you:
>
> • maintain and take whatever steps are necessary to prevent the destruction of all records, including electronic records, in your possession or control related to this Internet site, account holder or subscriber, and
>
> • provide appropriate notice to the subscriber or account holder responsible for the presence of DeCSS on your system or network, advising him/her of the contents of this notice and directing that person to contact the undersigned immediately at the email address provided above.
>
> • By copy of this letter, the owner of the above referenced Internet site and/or email account is hereby directed to cease and desist from the conduct complained of herein. (Motion Picture Association of America 2001)

A similar letter was sent to John Young, with the additional demands that he

> • advise us of the name and physical address of the person operating this site; and
>
> • maintain, and take whatever steps are necessary to prevent the destruction of, all records, including electronic records, in your possession or control respecting this URL, account holder or subscriber. (Motion Picture Association of America 2000)

8. The dispute is not about whether the RIAA will be able to force Verizon to reveal the identity of a suspected copyright infringer, but about what legal mechanism copyright holders may use. The RIAA would prefer to rely on the DMCA's turbocharged procedures because they are cheaper and faster than filing a "John Doe" lawsuit to unmask a peer-to-peer user.

> This case represents the entertainment industry's latest legal assault on peer-to-peer piracy. If its invocation of the DMCA is upheld on appeal, music industry investigators or other copyright holders would have the power to identify hundreds or thousands of music pirates at a time without filing a lawsuit first. (McCullagh 2003)

It is worth noting that such peer-to-peer users may in fact own the material being downloaded, e.g. on CD, and may therefore be engaging in "space-shifting;" a practice which has been recognized as fair use of legally obtained material. However, under the DMCA, this kind of legal action may be taken against what may thus be only apparent infringement.

9. "The Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) and songwriters' associations have drafted a letter expected to be sent Friday to the Fortune 1000 companies, cautioning executives that employees' song- or movie-swapping could put them at legal risk." (Borland 2002a)

10. Adobe Systems filed a complaint with the Department of Justice against ElcomSoft Co. Ltd., on grounds that they were selling 'a circumvention device' as defined under DMCA §1201(a). Dmitry Sklyarov, a citizen of Russia, and Ph.D. student, and ElcomSoft employee who had been in the United States at the time presenting at an academic conference sponsored in part by Adobe Systems, was arrested in July 17, 2001, and held until December of that year, when he was allowed to return home. A year later ElcomSoft was cleared of all four charges of producing a circumvention device, as well as the charge of conspiracy. (Bowman 2002a)

11.

> AT 6:30 ON A WARM MORNING IN JULY 1995 NEAR Salt Lake City, Miki Casalino was suddenly awakened by the ringing of her doorbell. When she opened the door, a troop of United States marshals and Novell employees flashed a court order and announced, "We've come to seize your son's computer." Although Casalino had no idea her 18-year-old son was illegally pirating Novell's and other programs on his bulletin board service, she was guilty in the eyes of the law. The marshals raided the house, impounded the computer equipment, and left. Another software pirate shut down. (Rothken 1998)

12.

> In a letter sent to more than 2,000 university presidents, the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) and other copyright owner trade groups told university officials that large numbers of students were using college resources to violate federal law.

> "We are concerned that an increasing and significant number of students are using university networks to engage in online piracy of copyrighted creative works," the trade groups wrote in a letter sent to universities this week . . .
>
> The letter, which the trade groups asked college presidents to send to university legal, financial and technological executives, stops short of threatening any kind of legal action. (Borland 2002b)

13. For example, Cornell University informed its students in 2002 that students may be subject to disciplinary actions within the school even if they comply with a request to remove copyrighted files. Tracy Mitrano, the DMCA Agent for Cornell University, warned that

> without your knowing it explicitly, by downloading [certain file-sharing programs] and the files, your computer is programmed to share it back out into the international Internet community. You are then therefore liable to be in violation of the DMCA, even if all you did was download a single song. Each criminal offense carries with it a minimum fine of $30,000 and a potential jail sentence.

Ms. Mitrano also noted: if you don't like or disagree with the law, learn more about and take a stand on it in the arena of national politics. With implications for free speech and academic inquiry, it might just become the political issue of your generation." (Miltrano 2002)

Another interesting example is the U.S. Naval Academy, which took possession of about 100 students' computers due to suspicion of copyright infringement:

> Each student gets a computer when they enter the academy. Illegal possession of copyrighted material could carry punishment including court-martial or a loss of leave, according to academy policy. The seizure comes just a few weeks after movie and music industry trade groups sent a letter to more than 2,000 university and college presidents across the country, including officials at the Naval Academy, requesting help in cracking down on unauthorized file swapping. (Bowman 2002b)

14. I am not alone in using this characterization, see, for example, Information Feudalism (Drahos and Braithwaite 2003). Lawrence Lessig also characterizes the goal of at least some of the "copyright warriors" as turning the information society into a feudal society, noting that already "the trend is toward the feudal." (Lessig 2004:267)

I should also say something about why I do not reference Drahos and Braithwaite's book to a greater extent in my discussion of informational feudalism to follow. Drahos and Braithwaite do not make a particularly strong case that the emerging situation is best characterized as feudalism rather than some other kind of consolidation, nor, I should take care to note, do they attempt to, as this is not their project. Their idea of feudalism is exhausted for the most part by what I will discuss in terms of advanced accumulation and systematic colonization, as may be clear from a fairly characteristic passage:

> By reproducing the times tables, growing their own seeds, using traditional medicines or selling indigenous art [citizens] may be trespassing on an intellectual property right that has been appropriated by a large company. . . . This is what we mean by being a trespasser on your own heritage. . . . This is what information feudalism means. When Monsanto contractually imposes obligations on farmers using the lever of its control over intellectual property in seeds, Monsanto does act like the feudal lord who allows serfs to till his land so long as they honor the obligations that are his due. (Drahos and Braithwaite 2003:201)

The idea of informational feudalism which I am trying to put forth is somewhat more robust and precise than theirs. This should not be in any way taken as a criticism of the book, which is well researched and argued. My intention in this comment is only to explain why I do not further reference the work in connection with the charge of feudalism, and to differentiate my use of feudalism from theirs.

15. Bob Kruger, Vice President of Enforcement for the Business Software Alliance (BSA), said "We don't like to call [an audit] a raid, but in reality that's what they are – raids." He goes on to describe these raids. As paraphrased;

> Once the alliance has a judge's OK, a team of auditors--usually BSA accountants with laptops--shows up at the business under suspicion, along with a few U.S. marshals. The auditors check what software is on each computer, then asks to see the company's licenses. For each software use for which the firm doesn't have papers, it's fined. While each violation carries with it a fine of up to $150,000, Kruger says, the actual figure comes down to a dance between BSA lawyers and the offending party's chosen representatives. He assures me that the alliance's intent is to make its point via the company's bottom line: 'It's one awfully rude way for companies to realize it's a lot more expensive to violate copyright laws than to comply with them. (Jackson 2001)

16. There follow a sampling of examples of international governmental support of the Business Software Alliance, a trade group concerned with primarily U.S. interests, and with particular US software companies, Microsoft in particular.

Australia

> A coordinated international crackdown saw premises across the country raided and computer equipment seized by the federal police last week, although no arrests have been made to date.
>
> Many ZDNet readers have expressed anger at what they consider to be the police enforcing

copyright law for big software businesses whose own "inherent weaknesses" in software design are the root cause of the problem. Software houses should "put up or shut up" one reader said and not be so keen to spend taxpayers' money.

"Personally think the police should keep themselves concerned with bigger cyber crime issues like child pornography or Denial of Service attacks. Not raiding peoples' homes and taking computer equipment just because some software or movie company might lose a bit of money. They need to get their priorities right," another ZDNet reader from Western Australia said.

Retired computer engineer Keith Styles from Melbourne agreed: "Let the police do their job of policing for the community and stop working for big business corporations. Copyright is a business problem not a police problem. Let the [corporations] do their own dirty work" (Lebihan 2001).

Canada

[M]y workplace received a visit from the Software Gestapo. It's part of a campaign organized by a number of software developers (Microsoft, Adobe, Symantec and a number of others) to reduce software piracy in the workplace and schools. They call themselves CAAST, the Canadian Alliance Against Software Piracy. Although I am no thief, I understand that companies deserve to be paid for their work, but it begs two questions: A) Can companies do this? B) How long until they start searching my home?

A team of middle aged men in semi-formal attire, stereotypical tech guys, swept the building, checking every computer to make sure that we weren't using software that we hadn't properly remunerated the developer for. We knew they were coming, and made sure that our site licenses were in order. From what I know, their lengthy visit went without a hitch. The men were polite, nicely asking each employee if they could take a moment to do an inventory of their workstation. They ran a program that did a quick scan of all applications on the machine, and sent the data to a network server. What they did with the data after that, I'm not sure.

The situation begs another question: why did they give us advanced notice? Granted, we would be pretty annoyed if they showed up out of the blue, but for all they know, we could have unloaded any pirated apps the night before. Quite simply, they weren't there to catch us, they were there to scare us. To send a message, 'the days of pirated software are over. We're watching you.'

I, for one, was scared, despite my innocence. Here, I had men, sent by a company (or a coalition of companies, technically), enforcing the law. The government wouldn't do anything to enforce the laws, they have bigger things to care about, so the companies took the law into their own hands, and it's being allowed to happen. What rights do companies have to become vigilantes (Agent000 2001)?

Croatia

Microsoft Corp. said it has stepped up its crackdown on software piracy in recent months and announced actions against 7,500 Internet listings for allegedly pirated products in 33 countries...

In Europe, the Middle East and Africa, the company said it has taken action in 2,274 instances of suspected piracy, sending notices to Web-site owners asking them to remove products listed for sale. It has filed four lawsuits and taken part in 56 raids with law-enforcement officials in that region; in Croatia alone, police in late March simultaneously raided the premises of 52 alleged pirates (Buckman 2000).

England, Finland, Norway

To hear the federal government and piracy experts describe it, DrinkOrDie, the network of software crackers that was the focus of worldwide anti-piracy law enforcement action on Tuesday, is the al-Qaida of Internet software theft. . . .

"They come from all walks of life. Many are successful white-collar business people by day, and DrinkOrDie members by night," [the U.S. Customs Service] said in a statement. . . .

But when the news broke that the Customs Service, the Department of Justice and foreign authorities executed at least 100 search warrants in the United States, Australia, England, Finland and Norway on Tuesday in an attempt to "dismantle" DrinkOrDie, a lot of people were puzzled. According to the evidence available from several cracking sites, Internet newsgroups and members of the Warez – or "software cracking" – community, DrinkOrDie was small potatoes in the world of software theft. . . .

"Only peasants get caught," wrote MoRf, a cracker in Moscow, in an online chat room" (Manjoo 2001).

Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon

Microsoft Corporation, a multi-national software company, last Thursday launched an anti-piracy campaign to clamp down on piracy within some Ghanaian companies.

The campaign, the company said, was a nationwide exercise that had already started in Nigeria and Cameroon. . . .

[Mr Franck-Alex Thalmas, Microsoft Anti-Piracy

Manager in charge of West and Central Africa] said companies would be asked to take inventories of their software pack and licenses to attest the legality of the software in usage regarding the law and license agreement.

"If we are satisfied about the information provided we would issue a certificate of compliance to give them the authorization to use the software," he said (Accra Mail 2001).

Malaysia

Following the promise to intensify efforts to crackdown on software piracy amongst end-users the enforcement division of the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs yesterday raided the premises of a publishing company in Kuala Lumpur for suspicion of using pirated software in the course of conducting its business. . . .

"There is just no excuse. Since the beginning of this month, the Ministry with the cooperation with the Business Software Alliance has advertised extensively in the newspapers and radio to remind senior managers and company directors of the consequences of ignoring the Ministry's warnings." [said Tuan Mohd. Shahar bin Osman, The State Director of Enforcement (Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs) for Wilayah Persekutuan.]

According to the Copyright Act 1987, if an organization is found guilty of copyright infringement, the company and its director/s may be liable to a fine of up to RM10,000 per infringing software and/or up to five years jail term.

Speaking on behalf of the Business Software Alliance, Mr. Chee Chun Woei, Vice-President of BSA Malaysia said, "Companies need to be aware that using pirated software does not simply mean using an illegal piece of software bought from the streets. Indiscriminate copying from an original CD-ROM is also an act of piracy if the license agreement does not allow it." . . .

In complementing the enforcement program of the Ministry, the BSA operates a toll-free hotline number 1-800-887-800 for reports of the use of pirated or unlicensed software in organizations. The BSA provides a reward of up to RM20,000 for every piece of information that results in a successful enforcement action (Business Software Alliance 2001).

Pakistan

In the latest move, BSA, the alliance of world's leading software companies has got another three software pirates arrested in Karachi, in assistance with the police.

All the eleven personal computers (PCs) loaded with the counterfeit computer programmes and the 29 illegal compact disks (CDs) were seized from their possession as a proof of infringing the country's copyright laws, he said.

The businesses that can afford to use legal software must do so in their own and national interest, [Jawad Al Redha, Director, Business Software Alliance (BSA), Middle East] suggested and clarified when someone creates a new computer programme and his creation is possessed without paying due royalties then it amounts to stealing, "which is neither morally nor legally justified" (Contact Pakistan 2001).

Singapore

Seven raids were conducted in October, across the island's heartlands like Toa Payoh, Ang Mo Kio, Marine Parade and Bedok North. This is because activity at the traditional centre of pirated goods, Sim Lim Square, has largely been stamped out by police action. The raids turned up over 4,000 pieces of illegal Microsoft goods. . . .

Microsoft corporate attorney Katharine Bostick said in a statement that the pirates wanted to exploit the worldwide marketing effort for Windows XP. "Not only are these pirates ripping off legitimate software retailers," she said, "they are exploiting the creativity, hard work and investment made by software developers and industry partners." . . .

The number of people apprehended in the raid was not given. However, those convicted of piracy can face up to seven years' imprisonment (Tsang 2001).

South Africa

[T]he SA [South Africa] Federation Against Copyright and Theft (SAFACT) has declared war on counterfeiting, saying it will be 'embarking on more raids which are expected to lead to convictions' during 2002. It will also be working more closely with other stakeholders, including software companies such as Microsoft.

Fred Potgieter, MD of SAFACT - an organization which represents distributors such as Ster Kinekor and Nu Metro - said his organization along with other business partners such as Microsoft has assisted the South African Police Services, customs and the Department of Trade & Industry in 'an increasing number of raids and counterfeit product seizures.

During 2001 SAFACT conducted 680 inspections and led 133 raids. The organization seized 7 584 VCs, 6 714 DVDs, 5 124 CD-ROMs, while a total of 38 cases were finalized...

Commenting further, SAFACT's Potgieter said

his organization is also working more closely at a grassroots level to combat counterfeiting.

"'We began an initiative last year which is starting to bear fruit. The major flea markets indicated their willingness to work with SAFACT in combating piracy. This lead to us creating a Memorandum of Understanding between our industry and the flea markets which will see all products being authenticated before the exhibitor is allowed to sell. These are all major steps.

"Our other major objective – besides clamping down on flea markets – is to target roadside traders. This is one of the biggest problem areas when it comes to counterfeit sales," said Potgieter (Microsoft South Africa 2002).

Sweden

MindArk AB, the Swedish creators of the 3D virtual Universe "Project Entropia" was raided by 70 officials of the Swedish court, acting on behalf of Microsoft and three other software companies.

Microsoft has accused MindArk of infringement on their software rights, stating that MindArk is willingly and unlawfully using over 600 programs without license. The raid on the MindArk headquarters in Gothenburg is believed to be the largest operation ever conducted by a Swedish court. . . .

Jan Welter Timkrans, the managing director of MindArk AB, said: "MindArk has duly procured licenses for all software used in its offices. I would even go so far as to say that MindArk is one of the companies with the most stringent policies regarding software licenses in use by its employees.

"One can expect that Microsoft and the other companies are keeping track of what and to whom their representatives are selling software. In some cases the registration process involves direct contact between our company and Microsoft or its colleagues. With this in mind, Microsoft must be assumed to know that what they have stated to the Swedish courts is not the full truth, therefore I must assume that Microsoft must have another agenda for their action against MindArk."

Jan Welter Timkrans suggests that Microsoft is trying to disrupt the launching of Project Entropia: "All through our development process we have kept track of which companies are visiting our site on the Internet and without comparison Microsoft has been one of the most frequent visitors." . . .

Microsoft of course owns Asheron's Call, which MindArk says is similar to Project Entropia (PC Game News 2002).

Thailand

Note the implied claim of the journalist; "being fuzzy about the concept of intellectual property rights" seems to be substantiated by a claim, on the part of Amorn, that the pricing structure is unfair and exploitative.

At Panthip Plaza, a shopping center specializing in computer gear, antipiracy raids are a seasonal affair. "The police come about twice a year, once in June or July and then before the new year," says Mr. Amorn, who owns eight software stores that sell mainly pirated compact discs. "We know because the police tell us. For the software pirates of Thailand, cat-and-mouse raids are just part of their business. Copyright infringement, say the pirates, is here to stay. The incentives for buyers and sellers are just too great.

"It now costs as little as 50 cents to produce a pirate CD," says an American analyst here. For $10, computer buffs can pick up CDs bundled with thousands of dollars worth of illegally copied software. "You can buy Oracle's database system for $25, whereas it would cost you around $20,000 to buy the real thing," Amorn says. "Look at [Microsoft Corp. chairman] Bill Gates; he's the richest man in the world."

Dhiraphol Suwanprateep, a Thai lawyer working for the BSA in Bangkok, agrees. "There is a feeling among some people that the pirate software dealers are simply engaged in competitive business practices against companies who are charging too much for their product," he says.

"Outright corruption is a factor, too," says an American analyst, who asked not to be named. "There's a bidding war between private software companies and the pirates. They're both trying to buy the police's support."

The BSA maintains that prices and piracy shouldn't be linked. "If you have the money to buy a car, then you should have the money to pay for the gas to run it," points out Mr. Dhiraphol. "With computers, it's the same. If you buy a computer, you have to plan for the cost of software."

Mr. Tan of the BSA puts the issue in even starker terms. "Whether the economic situation is good or bad, people should realize that software piracy is illegal," he says.

Supporting that line, the US government has been dangling antipiracy incentives. In 1993, the US Trade Representative named Thailand as a "priority foreign country" and withdrew preferential trade privileges on 16 items.

That hard-line approach brought quick results. By 1995, Thailand had a new copyright law stipulating penalties of up to four years in prison and fines of $20,000 for offenders. . . .

At their most extreme fringe, software pirates hit

> back at critics with nationalist arguments. "I don't see why we in developing countries should pay the same amount as Americans for software," said a Thai journalist, echoing their argument at a recent BSA press conference in Bangkok.
>
> Realists say piracy will remain a problem for many years. "We are concentrating on both education and enforcement," Tan says. "The emphasis is on making people understand the value of intellectual property. Right now, we're focusing on businesses, government, and universities."
>
> Just in case that message doesn't get through, the BSA has set up a hotline in Bangkok and is handing out cash rewards of up to $6,000 for information leading to the prosecution of pirates or companies using illegal software (Yvan Cohen 1997).

17. "Patents most benefit behemoths with huge patent portfolios. IBM, the No. 1 holder, has about 20,000 that generate more than $1 billion a year in licensing fees. But even giants such as Intel bemoan a system they say forces them to use big chunks of research budgets to stockpile patents just to use for cross-licensing when other patent holders threaten them" (Davidson 2004).

18. In two senses, one figurative, and one literal. Figuratively in that updates of software and unnecessary backwards incompatibilities, both within versions of a single program and between bundled programs, force us to continual upgrades even when there is otherwise no increase in use-value for us from one version to the next. This economic dependency is an exact analog of the economic dependency brought about through Monsanto's efforts to minimize actual sustainable farming techniques, as discussed below (see note 21).

19. For example, consider the anonymously produced "Phantom Edit" of George Lucas' Star Wars: Episode 1 - The Phantom Menace. The reader will note that this is one of the seemingly few cases where the corporate response is reasonable and measured.

> When asked about The Phantom Edit while backstage at the MTV Movie Awards Saturday night, George Lucas told Zap2it.com that he wasn't too worried about it.
>
> "The Internet is a new medium, it's all about doing things like that," said Lucas, who added that it gives people a new creative outlet. "I haven't seen it. I would like to."
>
> The general consensus of fans on the Internet seems to be that the new edit is an improvement on the original version. . . .JM Dash, one of the site's most prolific message board contributors, is also one of the film's most ardent supporters. "The stuff that has been cut out is all about making it a stronger movie and not just some fan cutting out the crap he/she didn't like," he said. "If that were true, it would have just had the Darth Maul sequence looped for two hours." He also said, "[In the Phantom Edit] Anakin is a stronger character. His crappy whoops and oops and that stuff is gone. It makes the kid seem like someone who is strong with the force and worth going against the council for as opposite to the whiny little kid in the original cut."
>
> Jeanne Cole, a spokesperson for Lucasfilm, told Zap2it.com that because no one at the company had seen a copy of the re-edited version, they couldn't officially comment about the changes. Cole did explain her company's policy regarding copyright infringement, though. "Lucasfilm aggressively pursues anyone involved with the unauthorized sale of our copyrighted materials," she said. But Cole also added that Lucasfilm recognizes the fan following the Star Wars franchise has generated and said the company generally doesn't pursue fans as long as they don't go overboard with their adoration. Essentially, she said, that means: "as long as nobody crosses that line - either in bad taste or in profiting from the use of our characters." . . . "At the end of the day this is about everybody just having fun with Star Wars," said Lucasfilm's Cole. "Go be creative" (Rodgers 2001).

20. Copyright-free material may, of course, be incorporated into copyrighted products. However, though encryption (or other use of code, such as the way that .pdf files can disallow copy-and-pasting of text), copyright-free material can be copy-disabled either by the fact of the encryption (if it should be difficult to decode) or by the legal protection of the encryption method itself (for such processes can be copyrighted and patented).

21. I refer to Monsanto's practice of licensing rather than selling seeds. The license includes permission for Monsanto inspectors to show up on the property at any time in order to ensure that seeds aren't being saved for replanting. Monsanto's 'terminator gene' project – cancelled due to public outcry – was an attempt to enforce this licensing requirement and the dependence produced thereby within the genetic code itself by making crops become infertile once sprayed with RoundUp, the only herbicide contractually allowed under the Monsanto license. Monsanto also donates GMO seed to third-world countries, teaching them non-sustainable farming techniques which make these farmers dependent upon Monsanto products and makes these farmers as well as their compatriots unable to sell to many European countries, whose laws often prohibit the importation of crops from countries growing genetically modified crops. This is then used by Monsanto as an example of philanthropy for public relations purposes.

22. "Software makers want businesses to buy their products the same way they purchase pens, staples, or automobiles--if you need cars for 10 workers, you buy 10 cars." (Jackson 2001) But this is true for members of the general public as well – for example,

> There are several ways in which you might lift

> intellectual property from software makers. First, you can soft-lift – that is, buy one copy of, say, Microsoft Office and install it on your home office system, your laptop, even your kids' PC. You may also be guilty of LANlifting . That's when you purchase a single-user license for an application but load it on your LAN, giving every PC on the network access.
>
> In addition, you might have a nasty habit of versionlifting . This is when you buy the same number of software packages as the number of PCs you own, but you only upgrade one or two programs and load the latest versions on all your computers. Think a few recent versions lying around the home office will insulate you from liability? You're wrong (Rothken 1998).

23.

> Shrink-wrap contracts . . . are the terms and conditions that accompany software distributed in a retail computer store. Shrink-wrap contracts usually read something like "By opening the packaging on this box you agree to the terms and conditions of the license." The terms and conditions of the license are more often than not located inside the box. . . . Click-wrap contracts were developed in response to the massive growth of the Internet and Internet technology. A party enters into a click-wrap contract when they click the "I agree" or "I accept" button which are preceded by terms and conditions. Examples of where click-wrap contracts can be regularly seen include before you download software, before you book an airline ticket online, before you download music and many more (Callan 2005).

The legality of these types of contract remains in dispute. They may require all manner of waiver of fair use, and are usually long, complex, and difficult enough to find that few end users are aware of the limits of their use of purchased goods, leading to a chilling effect on fair use. There are further problems making true consent problematic, as, for example, that if one should open a shrinkwrap licensed product, one cannot return it to a retail location because they cannot accept returns of opened software boxes in order to prevent from copying the material. Such products must be returned directly to the manufacturer if one declines to accept the terms disclosed after purchase, and manufacturers may refuse to accept a return on the same basis, and even if accepted monetary recompense would be likely to take 8 to 10 weeks.

24. As Lessig states the point,

> The real harm of term extension comes not from these famous works [e.g. Mickey Mouse, Rhapsody in Blue, the work of Robert Frost]. . . . If you look at the work created in the first twenty years (1923 to 1942) affected by the Sonny Bono Copyright Term Extension Act, 2 percent of that work has any continuing commercial value. It was the copyright holders for that 2 percent who pushed the CTEA through. But the law and its effect were not limited to that 2 percent. The law extended the terms of copyright generally.
>
> Think practically about the consequence of this extension . . . In 1930, 10,047 books were published. In 2000, 174 of those books were still in print (2004: 221-2).

25. "[B]y the time the copyright for these films [viz. those among the earliest protected under the CTEA] expires, the film will have expired. . . . [N]itrate stock dissolves over time . . . the metal canisters in which they are now stored will be filled with nothing more than dust" (Lessig 2004:224-5).

26. "Felony penalties attach when the violation consists of the reproduction or distribution of at least ten copies that are valued together at more than $2,500, or, under amendments enacted in 2005, when the violation involves distribution of a work being prepared for commercial distribution over a publicly-accessible computer network" (United States Department of Justice 2006).

27. For example, consider this case from Lessig:

> In 1990, [Jon] Else was working on a documentary about Wagner's Ring Cycle. . . . [In one scene] playing on the television set, while the stagehands played checkers and the opera company played Wagner, was The Simpsons. As Else judged it, this touch of cartoon helped capture the flavor of what was special about the scene.

Else then contacted Simpsons creator Matt Groening to clear permissions for the incidental use of copyrighted material, who said it was fine, but that he should clear it with the production company, Gracie Films. They were fine with the use as well, but told him to clear it with their parent company, Fox. "Then, as Else told me, "two things happened. First we discovered . . . that Matt Groening doesn't own his own creation – or at least that someone [at Fox] believes he doesn't own his own creation." And second, Fox "wanted ten thousand dollars as a licensing fee for us to use this four-point-five seconds of . . . entirely unsolicited Simpsons which was in the corner of the shot."

> Else was certain there was a mistake. He worked his way up to someone he thought was a vice president for licensing, Rebecca Herrera. He explained to her, "There must be some mistake here. . . . We're asking for your educational rate on this." That was the educational rate, Herrera told Else. A day or so later, Else called again to confirm what he had been told.
>
> "I wanted to make sure I had my facts straight," he told me. "Yes, you have your facts straight," she said. It would cost $10,000 to use the clip of The Simpsons in the corner of a shot in a documentary film about Wagner's Ring Cycle. And then,

> astonishingly, Herrera told Else, "And if you quote me, I'll turn you over to our attorneys" (Lessig 2004:95-6.)

28. To be exact, the WIPO states:

> The mission of WIPO is to promote through international cooperation the creation, dissemination, use and protection of works of the human mind for the economic, cultural and social progress of all mankind. Its effect is to contribute to a balance between the stimulation of creativity worldwide, by sufficiently protecting the moral and material interests of creators on the one hand, and providing access to the socio-economic and cultural benefits of such creativity worldwide on the other (World Intellectual Property Organization 2004:5).

This reinforces the implication of the quote above, for it is stated that it is the work of the human mind that is to be protected rather than the rights of the author or inventor. Similarly, we see that the WIPO seems to equate stimulation of creativity worldwide with such closed-source protection, as in this passage from the same document:

> WIPO increasingly does not stop short of promoting all kinds of intellectual property. This is only the means to achieve an end, which is to promote human creativity that results in industrial and cultural products and services enriching human society as a whole. Thus WIPO is increasingly involved in helping developing countries, whose creativity has yet to be adequately harnessed, to receive the full benefits of the creations of their citizens, as well as those of the outside world. WIPO's role is to assist them also in the preparation and enforcement of laws, in the establishment of sound institutions and administrative structures and in the training of appropriate personnel (2004:6).

This statement seems to imply that the WIPO will help developing countries by bringing in strong intellectual property rights, and by making developing countries into exporters of intellectual goods, which would admittedly be a welcome change from the historic and ongoing seizure and inappropriate recompense of the traditional and cultural knowledge and flora of peoples in developing nations. Nevertheless, it is not at all clear that strong intellectual property rights are in the best interests of developing nations, especially given the comparative difficulties in establishing a claim to compulsory licensing through WIPO or TRIPS, and, just as, in the quote above, it is inappropriate for the WIPO to assume that it is always in accord with the desires and interests of the author to impose exclusive rights, similarly it is inappropriate to assume that desires and interests of developing peoples are best served by signing on to a strong intellectual property regime. John Barton points out, for example, that "Devloped countries often proceed on the assumption that what is good for them is likely to be good for developing countries . . . [B]ut in the case of developing countries, more and stronger protection is not necessarily better," (Mantell 2002) and the report on Integrating Intellectual Property Rights and Development Policy from the Commission on Intellectual Property Rights strikes a note of caution:

> Whether IPRs are a good or bad thing, the developed world has come to an accommodation with them over a long period. Even if their disadvantages sometimes outweigh their advantages, by and large the developed world has the national economic strength and established legal mechanisms to overcome the problems so caused. Insofar as their benefits outweigh their disadvantages, the developed world has the wealth and infrastructure to take advantage of the opportunities provided. It is likely that neither of these holds true for developing and least developed countries (Commission on Intellectual Property Rights 2002:6).

29. This collusion is not limited to cross-licensing or anti-competitive bundling; we can see a striking example in the possible loss of network neutrality, which loss would help exclude independently produced content from being able to effectively compete against commodified goods produced by the copyright industries.

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By What Means, By Whose Means?

Alf Rehn

Dylan Wittkower has written an elegant argument for revolution in a digital age, but has in doing so also exposed a problematics for analyzing capitalism today. Many are the commentators who in the radical change in how digital goods can be produced and disseminated have seen the seed of a new kind of economic order, and who are now hearing at least the potential death-knell of the old capitalism. The possibility of subverting the entrenched methods of production and distribution has made folk-heroes out of pirates, has made people like McKenzie Wark hail the birth of a "hacker class", and even made business gurus talk in awed tones of people taking the means of production into their own hands. However, in this lauding, there be monsters.

The key issue, for me, in the line of argumentation that Dylan brings forth, is the notion of the means of production. We are all well aware how Marx argued that capitalism works (in part) through a process where these means are appropriated and controlled by a minority of rich individuals, who thus control these as capital. In other words, capital is (in part) synonymous with these means. When the laborer was divorced from them, she became a kind of resource to be exploited, as the ownership over the key element in production was monopolized due to the cost of acquiring the machinery necessary to compete in the milling or the mining trade. Expensive means of production made for a controlled economic order.

Much of the new debates regarding a tentative order of digital economy hinges on the lowered cost of these means. The argument, which Dylan builds on, extends and develops, is that when laptops and storage space becomes so cheap so as to be basically free, the prevailing economic order should start crumbling from its very foundation. And if anyone wants to bicker about how that makes elitist assumptions, just note how quite a few students have received free laptops, how Google makes both storage and processing power exceptionally cheap, point to Linux, and so on. It is a lovely notion, and one that has a lot going for it. We are starting to see an extended economy building on the cheap availability of digital tools, and it would seem the workers are shaking off both their shackles and their alienation, and that there is a tectonic shift happening in the economy.

However, this builds on the assumption that the means of production is a relatively fixed category. Granted, it is infinitely cheaper to buy a laptop and some server-space than it was to buy a small factory. Granted, this creates new possibilities for the person trying to either get into the capitalist game (cf. the fascination for garage start-ups) or to subvert it altogether. But is this enough to assume that the rules of the game have changed? I am not entirely sure.

My counter-argument to Dylan would be something like this:

- When Marx talked about the means of production, he did so building on his materialist philosophy and on the economic logic he saw in his time.
- If we think about what Marx meant with the means of production, the category becomes much more fluid – and the technological interpretation thereof becomes one fixed in a specific context.
- The process of capital depends on capturing the segment of the economic system that has the highest barriers of entry and is easiest to control.
- The concept "means of production" should refer to this (#3) category, and while it may have been technological at one point, it might be something else today.
- I contend that today, for an analysis of the process of capitalism, the means of production should be understood to refer to a more complex set of means.

I further contend that in the digital economy, the "means of production" in fact should refer to control over the judicial system and over the digital infrastructure/architecture rather than individual technologies.

In other words, I would challenge Dylan's argument that the means of production have been liberated! While I agree with him as to the specific shifts, my more pessimistic reading is that capitalism has in fact been exceptionally good at responding to them, and that the revolutionary class Dylan identifies might in fact be winning a battle in a war where the other side has already left the war zone. And even though he does point to issues of law and control, there still remains in the article an implicit assumption that the means of production refer to one specific thing: that is, the legal system falls outside of this.

Contemporary capitalism might not even require technological control as long as it can establish control over laws and standards (I will leave the connected discussion about issues such as brands and symbolic control out of this), and may, in fact, celebrate this shift. In an age where IPR is a business model all its own, the hacker with her laptop might, from the viewpoint of contemporary capitalism, be very much like the weaver with her loom, with the only difference being that the weaver was more difficult to embed into the system.

What we need to look at is not "Who controls the technology?" but rather "What is expensive today?" No worker could, in industrial times, afford an industrial drill. Today, a worker can afford a computer. But can a worker afford a lawyer? Can a worker afford three years of litigation? Can a corporation? Note that I am not trying to claim that the judicial apparatus would be the only means of production today, but I am trying to claim that we need a more complex understanding of the concept.

In other words, I would contend that the law has become a critical part of the capitalist process, and an analysis of the means of production needs to take it into consideration. Likewise, we may need to go somewhat further in our analyses of the technologies of production than was possible for Marx.

Consider Amazon and Google. Rather than claiming that their key technology would be the ownership and connected control over specific pieces of technology, both make very clear that they in fact offer an architecture, and that their control of this architecture is in fact what enables them to retain a dominant position. Google has more than 700 datacenters, dispersed globally. Amazon has spent more than two billion USD building an IT infrastructure that it now tries to sell through the concept of "HaaS – Hardware as Service". Both are actively pursuing dominance in cloud computing, something that underlies the idea that soon the "means of production" will be free (or "free"). To overtake this, the worker somehow needs to make the quantum leap from buying a laptop to buying a global infrastructure (and the legal team to go along).

In fact, one might argue that if we look at the purchasing power of the average worker, the situation is, in fact, worse today than it ever was. Even though it might have been nigh impossible for a worker to save enough to buy a small industrial setup (discounting windfalls), there might still have remained an outside chance. The question is, how much money would the contemporary worker need in order to retain the technology, the technological infrastructure, and the legal support to truly capture control over the means of production?

Some would say that this is still easier today, and that guerilla operations feeding off the existence of cheap technology and cloud computing have done great things. I would not contest this. What I will contest is that the movement of a particular kind of means of production to the hands of the many would mean that the means in their entirety are freed. In fact, this might be just what they would want us to believe. Today, there are no fixed means of production, only distributed ones, and we need to ask ourselves "Which one are truly worth controlling?"

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Knowledge and Cultural Production in the Context of Contemporary Capitalism: A response to Wittkower

Jeremy Hunsinger

Introduction

My critique of Wittkower's position on revolution industries is a metalevel critique based in the understanding of human subjectivity in relation to our knowledge and culture. In parallel, it is a critique of the reification of the capitalist model of intellectual property found in the revolutionary ideology surrounding open source software, Creative Commons, and related open knowledge projects. The critique is based in the core idea that knowledge and the knowledge society as founded in an appropriate understanding of knowledge and culture cannot be objectified into commodity relations. The basis of this critique is the understanding that knowledge and culture are processes that manifest themselves in human activities instead of understood as things or objects. When we think about knowledge in terms of knowledge societies, reflexive modernization and late capitalism, we should not think of it as something that is objectively alienated from ourselves, but as a series of processes that are distributed and communicated intersubjectively to establish shared meaning about the world.

Knowledge is a distributed process communicated amongst subjects in relation to their understandings of the world. This understanding is the basis of the knowledge society, the basis of the service economy of late capitalism, and the innovations in communication arts and practices of the internet age. This understanding of knowledge and culture is also the foundation for understanding knowledge production and cultural production. It is not the commoditized object that contains the knowledge or culture; it is only in the mixing of the commoditized object with subjects that the subjects share in knowledge. In the processes of distributed cognition, which imply communication and relatedly negotiations with consent and dissent, the processes become knowledge. The knowledge society is not a society of knowledge objects but a society of people, and it is in the people that I find hope.

The conceptual relations that ground the relationships between labor, capital, culture, and knowledge in Wittkower's construction of revolutionary industry do not map onto the actual relations of cultural and knowledge production. By constructing the objective relations as he does, Wittkower's Marxist conceptual roots are based on the same roots as liberalism; in that shared foundation, he provides for the operationalization of precisely the modes of enclosure and colonialization of knowledge and culture that are found in neo-liberalism. Given his understanding of the relationship between objects, values, and knowledge and the mediations of capital and culture, the revolutionary elements cannot be liberators, but will be leading the enclosure of our potential in neo-liberal corporatization. This corporatization, objectification, and enclosure of knowledge and culture, I argue, is the basis for the growing shared alienation, whereas Wittkower ties that alienation to labor and goods. Contrarily, should Wittkower escape his model of the subject and the relations of knowledge and value, then move toward the model that I have elaborated, the liberation of knowledge and culture implicit in humanism is again possible.

The metacritique of Wittkower's cultural environmentalism requires the construction of the knowledge society based in distributed cognition, but it derives also from the phenomenological sense that someone else cannot

objectify, commodify, or 'own' what is in our minds; corporations cannot own the processes in our minds which are our knowledges and values. Those knowledges and values are not alienable, but are subjectively experienced as ours through their communication. If we give up knowledges and values to objective relations, then we give them up to capitalist relations and when we will have given up our claims to our own minds, they will be owned to someone else.

Informational Cultures and Cyberinfrastructures

Cyberinfrastructures are the systems and structures that provide the basis for information-based development(Atkins and al. 2003; Unsworth and al. 2006). The internet, with its routers, fiber-optic cables, the computers with their processors, memory, monitors, and keyboards, and the systems that make them all function are what we mean when we say cyberinfrastructure. Most things that are labeled cyberinfrastructure exist on the internet between the users terminals; such as terabyte and petabyte computing clusters, high speed research networks, and huge data repositories. Cyberinfrastructure conceptually covers all the infrastructures necessary for the information age. Cyberinfrastructure is the means of production of informational objects and the base of our informational culture. As an economic base, it has a central ideological function that defines relations in our informational culture. That function is based on certain central social and technical assumptions about identity, the capacity to act based on identity, and the modulation of that capacity(Deleuze 1990, 1992).

Those assumptions are the basis for the control society, for reflexive modernity and for our consumer society(Deleuze 1992; Beck 1992; Beck, Giddens, and Lash 1995; Baudrillard, 1998). These three descriptions of society all participate in contemporary capitalism; they share fundamental assumptions of capitalism such as: the distribution of goods and risks, the assumptions of control of production and relatedly control of populations required by capitalist modes of production. In relation to those assumptions, we create the signs, codes, rules, norms, and laws that govern our relations to the the objects of our life (Thévenot 1984, 2001). These assumptions of capitalism have moved beyond their myths of origination and have become institutions of our political economy. These mythogenetic institutions are of legitimation, reflexively reconstructed based on our current social forms into places where they need not exist, following trajectories based on pasts that are frequently fictionalized in order to provide the apparatus to justify their current juridico-discursive regimes (Foucault 1990). People tend to use past patterns to make sense of new patterns; in those heuristics, they make novel techniques look and operate nostalgically as metaphors of a misremembered time. These ill-formed conventions and organizational principles, drawn from a obscure and fabricated past, inform our future. The banality of the institutions of the society of control is founded in our everyday lives and the reproduction of culture, organization, and meaning of our intersubjective domain.

There is not a new colonialism of informational capital as Wittkower argues, but instead we have the obverse of the extension of our current conventions and their meanings. Our organizations always look like colonialism in the obverse because they are all extensions of our past conventions as reterritorizations. Colonialism, like imperialism and capitalism as extensions, become translations of everyday conventions. They are seemingly dominating and transforming those conventions into a new intersubjective domain where they may be unwanted. These conventions may resonate with people's memories and respective narratives, especially in respect to differential power and knowledge. We can see this firstly in the organization of the protocols of the internet, which clearly reflect the borrowing and translating of bureaucracy and related necessities of dis/organized capitalism (Offe 1985; Davis 2003; Gershenfeld, Krikorian, and Cohen 2004). Similarly, the way we organize informational capital, such as intellectual property, is conventional(Lessig 1999). Intellectual property is intertwined with cyberinfrastructure is not a revolutionary construct but conservative one, as it borrows conventions and traditions from physical property and rewrites them as an apparatus which provides its justification. Intellectual property as part of informational culture is a new normal based in the practices of the banalities of everyday life. This new normal is part of the problem that Wittkower misses as it is based on the assumptions objectification of knowledge and culture found in his account and the neo-liberal account. We will always have colonialization of knowledge and culture as long as knowledge and culture are commodities instead of processes.

Individuation Contra Peer Production

Other norms come into play as one looks at how communal production and distributed cognition is undermined

in our informational culture. One norm of computing, and by necessity a norm of cyberinfrastructure, is centered in reflexive modernity; this norm waylays the construction of Wittkower's new communal production. The cultural norm of individualism is central to modernity and its self critique. Individuation as the process and individualism as the norm are pervasive in computing which co-produces the cultural norm of individualism in capitalism(Beck et al. 1995; Beck-Gernsheim and Beck 2002; Lyotard 1984). After the period the initial systems of computing where time-sharing was managed by people and bureaucracy, individuation and bureaucratic control of users has been built into computers and cyberinfrastructures (Salus [1994] 1995; Ceruzzi 2003). One standard tool for the management of the computing population that arose early was the idea of the computer user, which was given capacities in the computer system, and could belong to groups, which would also be a medium to transmit, restrict and modulate user capacity. Users and groups are systems of control, ordering, and governance of users through categorization and incapacitation.

The metaphorical 'universal machine' of modern computing is not predicated on freedom, but limitation, control and the modulation of user behavior. Every function of the computer or computing environment does not necessarily serve to empower users. From the interface to the processor to the networks, there are systemic structures of control and individuation. The individual is designed into contemporary computing at a basic level of interaction. All interaction is mediated on an individual level and at best this action only surpasses individualization in custom designed interfaces for some games. However, most experience of computing is an individual at an individuated screen working on an individuated keyboard. As the computer progresses toward commodity device via mobile computing vectors, individuation is following along. Escaping the construction of one's computer identity is less and less possible as participating in the consumer society is becoming participating in the information society.

Cyberinfrastructure is based on individualist and consumer-based understandings of its users. These understandings are apparent in the manifest affordances of the technologies as they are designed. From the technics of screen, keyboard and chair that construct our body in relation hardware, to the individual log-in, personalized interface, and private password that construct our identity in relation to software, to the credit cards, electronic signatures, IP and MAC addresses that enable the Trusted Computing(TM) required for establishing our consumer habits on the internet, computers are constructed on the assumptions of users as individual consumers participating in a consumer society.

The cyberinfrastructures of science and the cyberinfrastructures of consumption are both cyberinfrastructures of knowledge production and cultural production. Seemingly the construction of cyberinfrastructures in the realm of sciences and technology would not necessarily feed into the cyberinfrastructures of consumption in a modern world, but in reflexive modernity the border between the knowledge society and the consumer society is arbitrarily enforced by boundary workers in all disciplinary arenas and undermined by their actions in our everyday lives. This is not to say that knowing and consuming have become the same, but to say that in many of our everyday capitalist conventions; consuming is a metonym for knowing. As the distinction exists but the usage collapses, the meaning of the terms become ambiguously related and in that relation there is evidence of the new modes of valuation of capital.

This relationship between the labor of consumption, knowledge production, and cultural production is found in works on produsage and consummativity, but more generally, the relationship is centered around capital and its valuation (Baudrillard 1998; Dant 1999; Bruns 2006; Bruns 2007). Capital in the form of objects, capital in the form of knowledge and capital in the form of culture have become equivocated in terms of valuation, which in turn relates back to the construction and valuation of cyberinfrastructures. For the cyberinfrastructure of knowledge relies on the same conventions and norms as the cyberinfrastructure of consumption and the labor of knowledge consumption ends up similar to the labor of consumer consumption, especially in the realms of fandom and celebrity cultures (Jenkins 2006). The cyberinfrastructures, which could seemingly be separated, are one cyberinfrastructure, and the legal systems surrounding them, such as copyright and trademark, do not differentiate in any substantive manner.

The problem once again is one of objectification of knowledge which must occur for knowledge to act as a commodity to be consumed. In cyberinfrastructures, documents with information in them become property of individual users; these documents are inaccessible to others unless they are shared via special or novel technologies. The metaphor of ownership of information has transformed our understanding of knowledge in relation to consumption, and in that transformation we can locate the central issue of the the value of knowledge production and consumption, that of the objectification of knowledge and the denial of its intersubjective, processual nature.

The Affordances of Open Source as a Differential Mode of Production

Open source and peer production do not escape the affordances of the technologies they use; they do not escape the norms of cyberinfrastructure. They still rely on the same affordances and we construct the same conventions as other software either through interface abstractions and universalizations, such as the world wide web's Amazon One Click purchasing, or our almost universal tool-bar based word processing as found in both Microsoft Word and almost all open source word processors. These conventions of the interface form practices of everyday life and become a de facto politics with a technological deterministic antipolitics in the Bourdieuan field constructed from popular discourses of technology. The deterministic antipolitics center on the encoding of the idea that the systems are built or designed with affordances for the users that are supposed to direct and limit the possibilities for use. The politics exists in the building of the interfaces, the chance for change and the chance for revolutionary difference. However, the politics are limited by norms which are frequently based in research which constructs, quite similarly to the computer, the human as an individual without distributed cognition or intersubjective domains. The research forms the justification for the design of the interface, and it reflects the norms of the interfaces that people have learned to find effective. We have the dialectic of convention and its justification occurring in this continual reproduction of the perfections of the interface of the universal machine as machine of control. he politics of norm breaking/norm creation confronts the antipolitics of social reproduction and research; generating the next generation of sameness and difference in a manner that maps very closely onto the generation of consumer branding in the process of constructing and deconstructing markets. The affordances of the interfaces rarely, if ever, provide for any revolutionary mode of production, contrarily, radical changes in interfaces seem to generate from the antipolitics of a nonparadigmatic computer system, such as the Apple Iphone, the OLPC, and the Violet Nabaztag. The affordances of open source and peer production are, as such, vehicles of cultural reproduction more than vehicles of revolution.

The everyday lives of computer programmers associated with peer produced projects are rarely in any way revolutionary, though there are the occasional exceptions. Instead, the mode of production that they exist in is less one where they have escaped their mode of production in capitalism, but instead one in which their leisure time, their hobbies have come to participate completely in the same modes of production as their work lives. So long as they have access to the technical infrastructure to produce their code and distribute it, the mode of production is not revolutionary, but merely expansive. It is the reterritorialization of their leisure time by their labor and related interests.

So the differences of open source and peer production tend to produce more of the same in normal relation to the extensive division of the marketplaces in which it participates; it produces normal goods that compete in capitalist relations. The differential mode of production of a normal set of practices of an open source programmer produces multiple outcomes that not only reproduce software, but reproduce its interfaces, reproduces its norms and reproduces its sociology of knowledge. The differential aspect occurs when the software confronts different users with different knowledge bases, thus spinning out different sets of codes and conventions by user and group. Open source software and peer production, while seemingly novel, are not novel at all, they are conventions, codes, and systems of reproduction structured on prior conventions, codes, and norms. The multiple outputs of content creation and software production are still realized in the realm of capital and consumption where the idea of 'free as in beer' is a metaphor necessary to hide the multiple forms of capital required for production (Weber [1996] 2004; Torvalds and Diamond 2002).

Alienation in Relation to the Mode of Production

The mode of production of capitalism centers on the reproduction of capitalism and its problems in relation to modernity and its reflexive critique. The mode of production then is that which reflexively reconstructs the relations, forces, and means of production in ways that emphasizes the problems and risks of modernity. As argued above, cyberinfrastructure emphasizes the risks of individuation and its relation to the production of subjectivities. In reflexive modernity, the civil social order recreates our risks and problems into rational, manufacturable and accountable systems (Beck et al. 1995:10). Fundamentally, this is the demand for control, and this demand for control in the face of uncertainty, risk and shared problems is the basis for alienation from both our shared collectivity and our labors (Beck et al. 1995:10). The alienation of our labor is at best metaphorical and at worst metonymical for the

alienation based control and its generalization. The alienation that one feels by participating in capitalism is not an alienation of what we have produced, but an alienation based in what we can produce in a system of instrumental rationality and individual accountability.

The alienation felt in reflexivity modernity is an alienation based in the desire for autonomy, the desire to tell our own stories, and more importantly the ideological structures that say that individually, each person must be the center of his or her own narrative. This biographical production of subjectivity found in reflexive modernization feeds into the capitalist mode of production through management practices, such as taylorist time studies, self reports and individual annual reviews. These documentary practices narrativize our lives to others, objectifying it as goods operating in the political economy. That we tell our stories as individual and center ourselves there, even when presented with the co-production of software, the peer production of the internet. The problem that we feel, the problem that generates this sense of alienation, is not the feeling of labor lost, but of collectivity lost. Our alienation is not that we have lost ourselves in the production of the commodity object, but that in the production of the commodity object we have lost each other. We have to describe it in terms of individualized production, in terms of our individual contributions, our individualized narratives.

Corporatization against Collectives: the Leviathans of Contemporary Capitalism

This inability to construct an identity other than the individual is seen clearly in the reconstruction of this individual identity through corporatization of collectives such as has been seen in science and research (Newson 1998; Cannella and Miller 2008). In that corporatization has occurred in universities and research institutes worldwide, it should not be surprising that it exists in peer production and open source communities. The re-creation of the many people working in concert as a collective into the body of the corporation is the creation of the leviathans of contemporary capital (Hobbes 1994). In uniting the many into the one, the corporation creates a common good that is separate from the individuals, but to which the individual can contribute. We can see the creation of many leviathans of contemporary capitalism recreated in the open source boom and the web 2.0 boom. From the Mozilla corporation, to Apache Corporation, to Facebook, Flickr, and Twitter, the necessity to build the new whole that is the leviathan is found in the realization that the new whole can be worth more than any reasonable construction of the labor or any real construction of the ideas involved. That the leviathan is greater than any valuation of its parts indicates the break of valuation in capitalism. The hyperbolic valuation in both booms relates to the way the leviathans of contemporary capitalism work. They work through the alienation of collectivity in favor of the one and in re-embedding the stories of the many into the one they recreate possibilities of valuation untied to the individualized projects.

This lack of tie of the individualized corporation to the individualized people is a key move in capitalism as it introduces the possibility and virtuality of mediation. The leviathan as mediation between the many and the one is important because it allows the construction of the new identity, the telling of new stories, and the rebranding of the whole. This new whole is distanced from the people who form it, becoming its own entity, its own firm, and operates separately from the interests of the people involved in it.

This mediation of interests in peer production and open source operates through the original collectives or later through their leviathans. It is through the leviathan that we come to terms with the recreation of consumer of open source and peer-produced materials. Without the leviathan, the collective rarely if ever has the capital nor the political direction to construct first the audience then the consumer of its production. It is the integration of the new participant in capitalism, the creation of the corporation, that we generate the market and with that market we generate a whole secondary set of relations and conventions to the objects we produce (Amin 1995; Baudrillard 1998; Castells 2002). This set of relations and conventions relate to the construction of the parties that are outside of the corporation. That is to say, the construction of the clients, the audience, and in the end the consumer of the corporate provided goods as 'other'. It in this creation of this second set of relations and conventions that identify the producer/consumer and thus insider/outsider dynamic that generates a sense of alienation of the people who are within/without respectively to each other as individuals. The user of YouTube and the contributor to YouTube exist in a different relations than the original mixed collective of mashup producers distributed around the internet before YouTube. The nature of the social and conventional differences is the core of the issue of ownership in peer production and open source software. The idea with either open source or peer production is that anyone could

be on either side of the production/consumer dialectic. In that 'realization', we are not changing the organization, interests, or needs of the leviathans of contemporary capitalism, nor are we creating a new class of prosumers, or a new revolutionary mode of production, what we are creating is a new way for capital to accumulate in corporations.

Like Hobbes' leviathans of the state accumulating and representing power and capital, the leviathan of contemporary capitalism is the creation of a new identity, a new center for accumulation of capital, codes, conventions, and mediations, and in the creation of the new identity, you create and represent a set of interests. In that the collective that creates the leviathan, such as creators of mashups, have different interests than the leviathan, YouTube/Google, then there will be disinterest and dissent. These are also easily found on the internet with innumerable posts about the problems of YouTube, such as intellectual property claims, hate speech claims, and sexual content issues. There are even sites created to show you those things that YouTube has taken down, and then websites that represent what cannot even be shown on YouTube. The proliferation of data points railing against uniform identity can be found for all peer production and distribution systems. We need not look far in open source production either. The persistent problem of the forking of projects is an obvious example, that is when one set of programmers produce a code branch that becomes independent of the original branch and starts a new project following a different path thus duplicating the work of others and dividing the audience. These divergences from the corporation as the unity of representation of the project are significant in that they highlight the pluralization of identities in relation to individual narratives, as in each of these cases the technological systems are built to recognize and promote the individual and their stories above the needs, real or perceived of any construction of the collective.

We need to be wary of explanations of binarity in describing the operations of capital, as in each case the leviathans of contemporary capitalism do not ally as a whole in operation against any subset of users necessarily. On the occasion that they create new, larger wholes, such as the MPAA, RIAA, or the BSA we have to realize that the interests of the new whole are not really the interests of those it seeks to represent, this is clear from the numerous releases of open music and statements against these corporations by their own constituents. This indicates that while we do have an age of leviathans that represent themselves as sovereign people serving communities of producers and users, we also have a proliferation of dissent from those leviathans. However, we should not assume that open source software or peer production operates outside or differently within the corporation, as the operations of the dominant paradigm and its conventions tend to control the long march through the institutions. It is that long march through institutions that tempers and recreates the conventions and practices as amenable to current modes of production, taking the radical potentiality of the collectives and processing it back into individuated production.

This accretion of capital in corporations is made possible by the construction and conventionalization of intellectual property rights. Those in turn are based on a misconception of knowledge and culture as commoditized objects. The capital accreted in corporation is valuable, but it is not valuable necessary to individuals as persons as much as systems for reproductions of the valuation of capital and the extension of value in that reproduction. The value of the leviathan is not in its corporate body, but in that body's symbolic regime, the institutions and institutionalizations it creates, and its projection into the future. If we can manage to promote an understanding of knowledge that contradicts the justificatory apparatus for intellectual property, we can undermine the legitimation of the institutions.

Conclusion: Rethinking Value and Informational Cultures

In our current informational culture, Marxist (and likely other) interpretations require adaptation because as our plural cultural and economic systems change, the modes of analysis for those systems must adapt to the extent that the analysis needs to continue to map onto the practices and economics of the peoples. No singular perspective seems to be able to map onto all times and all places in any universal sense. Marxist analyses of the current informational culture and the related political economy frequently try to be universal and in doing so they lose the facts of our world in the face of the world that was the basis of Marx's analysis. Specifically, a Marxist cultural economics centered on labor-value as Wittkower uses no longer seems to capture or even apply in our informational culture. It has been surpassed by Baudrillardian economies of signs and desires as emphasized in his analysis of the consumer society in which we live (Baudrillard 1998). Value in our informational culture has become a free floating code of signs and conventions, less based on any reflection of the objects or labor then in the conventions surrounding the objects, and the consummativities of those objects. When confronted with the consumer society in

our informational cultures, a reprisal of labor theories of value fails to capture the complexities of value found in the consumer society. Labor, as such, has failed to become abstracted from value and instead has become the metonym of value, but that metonymical relation exists in a field of near infinite transposition with other concepts that are also the metonym of value, such as desire, symbolic meaning, and humor. Each possible transposition indicates a possible alternative meaning with its interpretation and in that the mode of valuation is increasing disjointed from the mode of labor. This disunion of reference through metonymical relations indicates over time that the labor theory of value is not really an operating system of value, but at best one set of tenuous relations between a laborer and an object of desire. The labor theory of value is a system of objectification of value that fails to operate in a world of subjective interpretation of values.

In all cases of value, we are confronted with questions of modernity, questions surrounding the purity of the concepts, questions around the relationship between simplicity and clarity, questions of humanisms and antihumanisms, and ultimately questions of the nature of knowledge. In our questions of modernity, we are confronted once again with the choice of modernities and within the modernity we choose, the form of informational culture which rests on its assumptions. Should we choose a modernity based on the isolated cartesian models of knowledge that objectify and construct knowledge as external to us, or should we follow Montaigne and recognize that knowledge is a process, a reflective process of constructing the world within us to relate to the world outside (Toulmin 1992)? It is in this recognition of modernity, and its internal self-critiques, that there is the space to return to Montaigne's construction of knowledge, and through that construction we can resist the objectification of knowledge in relation to the objectification of value.

These choices, like the analytical perspectives that devolve from them, inform our understanding of the questions, concepts, axiologies and axioms that we use. The problem that I am pointing to is not one of Marxist analysis, but one of the acceptance of certain terms of Marxist analysis and what those terms cover in modernity. The meaning of those terms are bound up in an ongoing process of dissensual resistance to modernity. To say 'labor', is not merely to name a process, but a people, and beyond a people, it names a nearly infinite linguistic process of negotiation in everyday life that constructs and legitimizes relations in society. In using the labor theory of value, we are invoking a construction of reality that legitimizes and delegitimizes elements of people's experiences, their everyday lives, and in that we need to insure that we construct their everyday lives in relation to the reality we are constructing in our analysis, lest we pass the negative implications of our perspectives into reality (reifying problems without providing solutions).

As such our perspectives play their part in reflecting how we consider knowledge production and relatedly cultural production. By constructing this critique of the informational culture in modernity a consistent awareness of being one of many competing alternative understanding of reality pervades the test. It is not merely our construction of the theories we use which informs people, but also the competing viewpoints which are part of the mode of production of knowledge and are part of the conditions of knowledge production in our society. Realizing the plurality of perspectives and their relation to models of knowledge production in the informational culture, our perspective must account for the plurality of normativities constructed within them. Critical and reflexive analysis, as such, must move beyond dismissing the relative goods of one account over another and recognize why that account has become the legitimate or illegitimate choice for those people using it.

In this meta-critique of Wittkower, I have attempted to show that there are several issues with his account of revolutionary industries. I have avoided his reconstruction of the problem of copyright to center on the reasons why copyright and the current legal framework is not the core of the problem. Instead, I identify the core of the the problem as a cultural issue of modernity and capitalism. We have a problem of objectification of value, knowledge, and culture, which allows for their commodification. I have identified places where given current practices and computer systems, the revolution that Wittkower suggests may happen, will not happen.

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Saying Something or Having Something to Say: Attention Seeking, the Breakdown of Privacy, and the Promise of Discourse in the Blogosphere

Gloria E. Jacobs

The genesis of this article was my blog posting about an article in the New York Times about Emily Gould's experience as a blogger both on her own and for the Manhattan media gossip website Gawker. In other words, this is an article brought about by a blog posting about an article about a blog. Blogging, or weblogging, as some people call it, is like that. Although easy to do, the implications of blogging are complex and far-reaching. Life in the blogosphere or world of blogging is about making connections between people and ideas and texts; however, as I discuss in this article, blogging is also about attention seeking, the breakdown of the lines between public and private space, and the redefinition of privacy. To be a blogger can mean contributing to the breakdown of discourse by sending superficial texts into society or it can mean participating in the rebirth of public discourse by engaging in reflection and analysis of the world.

Although blogging is generically defined as an online journal, Walker (2007) gives a more comprehensive definition.

> "A weblog, or *blog, is a frequently updated website consisting of dated entries arranged in reverse chronological order so the most recent post appears first. Typically, weblogs are published by individuals and their style is personal and informal. Weblogs first appeared in the mid-1990s, becoming popular as simple and free publishing tools became available towards the turn of the century. Since anybody with a net connection can publish their own weblog, there is great variety in the quality, content, and ambition of weblogs, and a weblog may have anywhere from a handful to tens of thousands of daily readers". (paragraph 1)

This definition, however, is recognized as not sufficient for capturing the complexities of the blogging experience (Mortensen 2008). Mortensen, who worked with Walker on early academic study of blogging, identifies several characteristics of blogs. The text 1) exists within public space, 2) includes elements of the personal, 3) is a form of publishing, and 4) is characterized by connections between text fragments within the blog and to other online texts.

Blogs originated as lists or logs of websites (hence the term web-log), and some continue to be primarily lists of links to other blogs and websites (Knobel and Lankshear 2006). The practice of blogging, however, has expanded to include a wide range of activities including community blogs, news filters, political analysis, personal stories and journaling, commercial blogs, and educational blogs among others (Downes 2004; Knobel and Lankshear 2006). Blogging also exists within a broad array of digitally based communicative modes such as social networking sites (e.g., Myspace, Facebook, LinkedIn), instant messaging (e.g., AIM), texting and picture messaging (e.g. mobile phones), status postings (e.g. Twitter), photo posting (e.g., Flickr) and video posting (e.g., Youtube).

As predicted by Goldhaber (1997) blogging platforms allow for the integration of these multimedia forms so that a blog can consist of audio blogging and video blogging (vlogging) as well as well as images and graphics, sound

clips, video clips and links to other sites. However, the content of blogs is not what makes a blog; it is the reverse chronological format, the space for reader interaction through comments, the act of blogging itself (Downes 2004; Mortensen 2008) and the social context in which the blogging occurs that constitutes a blog. For instance, blogging can be an exercise in self-indulgence in which the reader and writer lose distance between the public and private by participating in "oversharing" (Gould 2008a), which is the act of making too much private information public, or "thoughtcasting" (Croal 2008), which is the act of posting or publishing every little event in one's life or thought that passes through one's mind. Such acts, I suggest are a reaction to an attention economy (Goldhaber 1997) in which information is plentiful but attention is scarce. Or, blogging can be about creating and building relationships, participating in a community, and reflecting on experience at both the local and global levels. Mortensen (2008) writes that blogging is about connections between individual bloggers as well as connections between texts. Furthermore, blogging transcends space and time in that bloggers and blog readers from around the world are able to share texts, comment on those texts and together build new texts. Participating in blogging is about both compressing space and time (Harvey 1996), but can also be a way to slow down fast capitalism through reflection and making and remaking connections between ideas in order to build and rebuild syntheses that allow us to view the world in new ways and perhaps even to resist the forces of a fast capitalist economy. Finally, blogging can be an entry point into participatory culture (Jenkins, Clinton, Purushotma, Robinson, and Weigel 2006). That is, it can provide us with a means to move from being passive consumers to being content creators and thus participants in wide ranging public discourse on a variety of topics.

In this article, I explore the world of blogging through three lenses: fast capitalism and the role of the public and private spheres (Agger 2004), the attention economy (Goldhaber 1997), and participatory culture (Jenkins et al. 2006). I argue that whereas the attention economy contributes to the decline of discourse and the loss of separation between public and private space (Agger 2004), participatory culture offers a response to the alienation of fast capitalism. In order to accomplish the above stated argument, I draw on Gould's essay and the reactions to her work in order to illustrate the tensions that exist within the blogging world. I end by reviewing other forms of blogging that hold out hope for resisting the pressures of fast capitalism.

The Attention Economy

The rise of blogging as an online activity has occurred within what has come to be called the attention economy. Goldhaber (1997) argues that the economic laws of the Internet world are different from those of the material world. Specifically, information is plentiful on the Internet, but attention is scarce. He argues that since attention is scarce, the ability to gain attention is a form of power in that the person who has attracted attention can then lead people to perform or act in a certain way. The attention economy, he suggests, is supported by the Internet in the following ways: 1) a rapid rise in the number of people attached to the web and trying to get attention through it; 2) continued growth in the capacity of the web to send out multimedia and capture attention through those means; 3) increased ability of the web for transmitting attention; and 4) increased ease with which to gain attention through the Internet. Goldhaber's predictions have, in many respects, come to pass, particularly in the world of blogging. The growth of blogs has been almost exponential since Technorati began tracking blogs in 2003 (Sifry 2007). According to Technorati, the number of blogs doubled every 5-7 months from 2004 to 2006 (Sifry 2007). In April 2007, Technorati reported tracking over 70 million blogs and that 120,000 blogs were being created every day (Sifry 2007).

As the blog numbers increase, so too does the difficulty in attracting attention. As Knobel and Lankshear (2006) note, Shirky's (2003) power law distribution tells us that blogs that were first online are more apt to gain and hold attention than those which arrive later on the scene. As Goldhaber (1997) theorized, given a plethora of information, people must come up with ways to gain the attention of the public and one way to do this is to offer something new. He argues that whereas the material or Fordist economy is based on the easy replication of items, the attention economy demands individualism and originality. Thus, the successful member of an attention economy is the individual or company who shuns repetition and duplication. In the world of blogging, you will not be read if you are not offering your readers something new or interesting.

I suggest that there are two ways in which people respond to this demand for originality within the blogosphere. They overshare as a way to assert their individualism, or they strive to say something that will allow their readers to see the world in a new way. This is not to suggest an either/or existence for blog writers: to do so misses the nuances

of what blogging is, what the purposes of oversharing are, and what the challenges of carving out a space for oneself online consist of. What I contend is that the attention economy pushes people to respond in particular ways, but that with reflection and analysis, we can determine which way is most supportive of our needs as content contributors and as content consumers.

Permeable Boundaries and the Changing Nature of Privacy

In the drive for attention, the media culture pushes into private space and individuals push the trivial and intimate aspects of their lives into the public sphere. This phenomenon is one aspect of what Agger (2004) described as the breakdown of boundaries between public and private space as well as the "dematerialization" of the line between text and the world. He suggests that these boundaries are dissolving due to the media culture and that the dissolution of these boundaries has led to a decline in discourse. The two boundaries in particular are that of the separation between the public and private spheres and dissolution of the line between text (which he defines as writing and acts of figuring) and the world of society and culture. The boundary between the public and private spheres, he argues, has been brought about by the media culture, which has pushed into our private lives through the always-on nature of the electronic and digital world. Business and industry is no longer marked by location and material spaces such as office, but rather by what we do such as responding to email late at night or on weekends. This incursion into private space serves the purpose of capitalism in that it robs us of time to think and reflect, which Agger suggests, causes us to lose our freedom. Because time and space has been compressed (Harvey 1996) we lack the time and distance for reflection and to develop a clear vision of what is going on in within society (Agger 2004). Without distance, he tells us, we are unable to appraise our lives in order to identify that which binds us so that we can cut those bindings (Agger:132).

When discussing the dissolution of the boundary between texts and the world, Agger (2004) argues that texts are casually dispersed into the world and are read in an equally casual manner by people who lack the time and preparation to read carefully. This preparation includes knowing to ask questions about underlying principles, definitions, or grounding assumptions (p. 28). He argues that in the press of time, we have learned to skim and skip over words and sentences and the thus risk losing sense of an author's meaning and argument. We have become, Agger argues, a literal culture missing the ability to read analogically and metaphorically.

From a New Literacy Studies perspective, what Agger (2004) has identified is a shift in the social purposes of text production and consumption. The New Literacy Studies defines literacy as being a social practice (Street 1995; Street 2003) which means that we read and write for socially meaningful purposes within a community to which we belong (Gee 2000c). Because each community has differing sets of rules for what constitutes socially meaningful, what constitutes literacy shifts across contexts (Barton, Hamilton, and Ivanic 2000; Gee 2000c). These rules are, of course, historically, politically, and culturally informed and embedded within the power structures of society (Gee 1999; Gee 2000c; Hull and Schultz 2001; Street 1995). Therefore, as we consider the meanings and purposes of blogging, particularly in relation to a fast capitalist world, it is important to remember the contextual nature of literacy and literate acts as they are embedded within global structures.

The new literacies also refer to how technology "enables people to build and participate in literacy practices that involve different kinds of values, sensibilities, norms and procedures, and so on, from those that characterize conventional literacies. These values, sensibilities, and so forth, comprise the 'new ethos stuff' of new literacies" (Lankshear and Knobel 2007:225). The technologies of the new literacies include the hardware and software that contain particular affordances for participation, and as Lankshear and Knobel suggest, the ethos of the new literacies also includes those things we value and the way we think about what we are doing with the technology. Most importantly, they argue, the new ethos is participatory, collaborative, and distributed.

Blogging can be seen as an illustration of the relationship between global and local literacies as well as an example of the ethos of the new literacies. An example of this new ethos is Mortensen's (2004) argument that blogs can individualize the general and the universal. She writes that within blogs, the drama of cultural conflicts become personal, subjective, and understandable and suggest that blogs are "a new narrative: the story of an interconnected world, the tales of a new public sphere, the digital public" (heading 3, paragraph 7). Mortensen goes on to claim that to blog means that you are connecting yourself to something bigger.

By placing Agger's (2004) concerns about the public/private and text/world boundaries in juxtaposition to

Mortensen's argument that blogging is a way to generalize the specific and make the global specific, we are lead to consider whether the nature of privacy and text are changing. Lankshear's and Knobel's (2001; 2007) analysis of blogging and other forms of new literacies suggest that the attention economy results in new definitions of privacy or private space. Drawing on the work of Goldhaber (1997) they argue an attention economy demands that members live an open life. Privacy, they contend, is less a matter of what people know about oneself and is more about avoiding constraints placed by the people who pay attention. Their redefinition of privacy also addresses Agger's (2004) concern about the incursion of the business world into private space. Lankshear and Knobel suggest that privacy includes the ability to filter what comes in as well as controlling what we share. Maintaining privacy and the separation of public/private space becomes an act of balancing the push in of information as well as the need to push out in order to maintain a public presence within an attention economy.

The realization of balancing the public and private is not just an academic concern. Croal (2008), a technology writer for Newsweek, writes of his experience "thoughtcasting" (p. 56) using Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr, all social networking tools that include elements of blogging. He raises the question of how much and what kind of information to share with the world. To answer his question, he interviewed the creators of Twitter and Tumblr about how they distinguish between what should be public and what should be kept private and were told by each of a set of self-determined guidelines they use before posting online. Croal also informally polled members of his online social network and found that all had similar types of self-checks including "the Mom test" which involves asking themselves whether their posting was suitable for their mother to see. I suggest that Croal's reflective essay indicates that members of online communities are experiencing a growing awareness of the relationship between the public and the private as well as the role of text in creating online identities and spaces for discourse.

As Agger (2004) suggests, the line between the public and private is breaking down, but I argue that as the boundaries break down they reform in new ways that include a growing awareness of how to manipulate the boundaries for the purposes of gaining attention as well as increasing knowledge of how to filter what and how much of the public sphere to allow into the private world. This growing awareness holds hope for resisting the decline of discourse and opening up space for reflection, analysis, and transformation.

Web 2.0 and the Rise of Participatory Culture

Thus far I have discussed the nature of the attention economy and way it pushes people toward originality and individualism as they seek to find attention through the Internet. I suggested this push for originality manifests itself either through "oversharing" and "thoughtcasting" or through reflection and deeper thinking. I also discussed how the drive for attention has contributed to the breakdown of the boundaries between the public and private spheres as well as the dissolution of discourse as people "overshare" and "thoughtcast". However, I also suggested that there appears to be a growing awareness of the shallowness of online discourse and the promise of the Internet being a place where discourse can be reclaimed. In this section, I explore how the Web 2.0 and the advent of participatory culture (Jenkins et al. 2006) may be providing an antidote to the pressures of the attention economy and fast capitalism.

The term Web 2.0 refers not to technological change in the underlying architecture of the Internet, but rather the way people use the Internet (Graham 2005). The term was first applied in 2004 and has since grown as a way to identify the way the Internet has developed into a participatory space rather than simply a space of consumption. Lankshear and Knobel (2007) argue that the difference between the first, pre-21st century iteration of the Internet (Web 1.0) and Web 2.0 is the ethos that guides participation.

Specifically, Lankshear and Knobel (2007) argue that under Web 1.0 content development was very much part of the industrial world whereas under Web 2.0 it is created by users. Web 1.0 is industrial, and Web 2.0 is post-industrial. Most importantly, the ethos underlying Web 2.0 is that creation occurs collaboratively and through a distributed network, and content is created through participation rather than being handed down from an organization. Table 1 demonstrates some of the differences Lankshear and Knobel have identified.

The differences between the Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 worlds further underscore the differences between the Fordist and post-Fordist economies. In a Fordist economy decisions are made by industry leaders and handed down for specialized implementation among workers, whereas in a post-Fordist economy, managerial hierarchy is flattened because the fast pace of business requires day-to-day decisions to be made locally based on immediate

need (Gee 2000a; Gee 2000b; Kincheloe 2000). In order to survive in such a world, workers must know how work collaboratively, quickly, and across space and time. If they do not, they risk being limited to low paying, economically unstable service and production jobs. Participation in Web 2.0 practices may be an reproductive avenue for preparing youth for participating in a fast capitalist economy (Jacobs 2006), but it may also be a way of transforming society through membership in a culture of democratic engagement (Jenkins et al. 2006).

Table 1. Web 1.0 Comparison to Web 2.0

Web 1.0 / Old literacies	**Web 2.0 / New literacies**
Publishing	Participation
Centralized expertise	Distributed expertise
Individual possessive intelligence	Collective intelligence
Individuated authorship	Collaboration
Scarcity	Dispersion
Ownership	Sharing
Normalization	Experimentation
Stability and fixity	Innovation and evolution
Generic purity and policing	Creative-innovative rule breaking
Information broadcast	Relationship
Professional service delivery	DIY creative production

According to Jenkins et al. (2006), a participatory culture is one in which members of a community can easily become participants.

> [A participatory culture is] a culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one's creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices. A participatory culture is also one in which members believe their contributions matter, and feel some degree of social connection with one another. (Jenkins et al. 2006:3)

It is important to note that participatory cultures are not dependent upon the Internet, and indeed anthropological research literature demonstrates that participatory cultures exist in many communities and are often referred to as communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998) or communities of learners (Rogoff 1990; Rogoff 1994). These communities or cultures, which are often found in agrarian, artisan, or indigenous populations, have become models for progressive educators and are supported by the learning theories originally developed by Vygotsky (1978) in which learning is seen as the gradual handing over of responsibilities important to the community through guided apprenticeship (Rogoff 1990). Furthermore, the idea of community is central to participatory culture in that the focus shifts from that of individual expression to community involvement and involve the development of social skills developed by those who are engaged as content creators in the Web 2.0 world (Jenkins et al. 2006).

The social skills Jenkins et al. (2006) identify as being learned in a Web 2.0 based participatory culture include play or experimentation, performance which is the ability to adopt alternative identities in order to improvise, simulation

of real-world situations, appropriation which involves taking existing texts and remixing it to create something new, multitasking, distributed cognition which involves interacting with tools to expand mental capacities, collective intelligence which requires the pooling of knowledge, judgment or the evaluation of multiple data sources, transmedia navigation or the ability to follow the flow of text across modalities, networking in order to find, synthesize and disseminate information, and negotiation which requires the ability to move across diverse communities, understand multiple perspectives, and follow alternative norms (Jenkins et al 2006). As Table 2 shows, it is clear that the skills learned by those engaged in a participatory culture correspond with the qualities of Web 2.0 named by Lankshear and Knobel (2007).

Table 2. Web 2.0 Qualities Compared to Skills Learned in a Participatory Culture

Qualities of Web 2.0 / New literacies	**Skills Learned in a Participatory Culture**
Participation	
Distributed expertise	Distributed Cognition
Collective intelligence	Collective intelligence
Collaboration, Dispersion, Relationship	Networking
Sharing	Negotiation
Experimentation	Play, Simulation
Innovation and evolution	Performance, Transmedia navigation, Multitasking
Creative-innovative rule breaking, DIY creative production	Appropriation, Judgment

Given the differences between the types of engagement and skills that are needed within and developed by the Web 2.0 world or participatory culture, I suggest we need to approach our analysis of what occurs within the blogosphere with an understanding of the ethos that guide those who participate in that world. To apply a Web 1.0 way of thinking to a Web 2.0 world is ineffective. This does not mean we disregard the understandings of the world that have been developed during the course of human history, but rather that we explore the problematic nature of the attention economy, the breakdown of the boundaries between private and public space as well as the dissolution of the line between text and the world through an understanding of the fact that we are in the process of transitioning from a top-down, industrial Web 1.0 way of thinking to a democratic, post-industrial Web 2.0 mindset. This may be difficult given Prensky's (2001) point that those of us, such as myself, who were born into the predigital world have a different way of understanding the world than those who have grown up in a world permeated with digital technologies; however, I believe it is not impossible and will attempt to do so in the next section.

The Byzantine World of Blogging: The Case of Emily Gould

At this point I turn my attention to the online world of Emily Gould, who has been called "the world's most successful blogger" (Barna 2008). This moniker is not meant as praise but rather as a response to her ability to build a public presence. It is important to remember that the world of blogging I am describing here is only one type of blogging. As discussed earlier, there are educational blogs, political blogs, news aggregate blogs and so on. I have chosen to focus on the world of Gould's blogging because it captures so well the issues described by Agger (2004).

Gould was an associate editor at a publishing house in New York and was also keeping a personal blog (http://www.emilymagazine.com/). She had built a readership of several hundred people, some of whom she knew in person, but most of whom she knew only through their comments. During this time, she also wrote a young adult book and was an avid reader of the online gossip site, Gawker (http://gawker.com). When she was 26, Gould left the publishing house to become an editor for Gawker. In spring 2007, Gould's notoriety grew when she appeared on the Larry King Show to discuss the problem of paparazzi and the Gawker feature, Gawker Stalker, to which people send in text or email messages reporting celebrity sightings in Manhattan. Jimmy Kimmel, a comedian who built his career around a fraternity boy persona, had recently been a target of a Gawker post in which he had been identified as being drunk, guest-hosted the show. During the program Kimmel and his other guests challenged Gould about Gawker Stalker and the issues of privacy and safety. Following Gould's appearance, the clip was posted online (see Youtube). Immediately following her appearance on CNN, comments to Gould's blog postings on Gawker exploded. Since that time, the Youtube clip has received over 1,500 comments and 622,899 views.

In her May 2008 New York Times Magazine essay, Gould reports suffering emotionally during this time, but she continued to work for Gawker and continued blogging. Following a break-up with her longtime boyfriend, she posted information about her personal life on the Gawker site and also started a second personal blog (http://heartbreaksoup.wordpress.com) on which she shared more intimate aspects of her life. Although she claims that this blog was supposed to be private, it found readers and become public. Eventually Gould left Gawker, broke up with her new boyfriend, and wrote about the breakup in her blog. Her former boyfriend reacted by writing an article about having his personal life exposed on a blog in the New York Post Page Six Magazine (Stein 2008). Gould's infamy continued to grow and in the immediate aftermath of the publication of her essay, she was the target of scathing remarks about her self-indulgent writing style, her propensity for "oversharing" and for laying bare the details of not only her life but of those around her.

Although little written about Gould has been complimentary, it is clear that Gould has achieved increased public presence and prominence in the online media world. In June 2008, a Google search on "Emily Gould" resulted in 71,600 hits. I examined the first 30 pages of hits, and with one exception, all referred to the blogger, Emily Gould. I closely examined the first few pages of hits and found mostly links that specifically discuss her New York Times Magazine essay. These include online newspapers and blog sites such as The Huffington Post (primarily political news), Silicon Alley Insider (digital technologies news), Gawker (gossip), FishbowlNY (a media blog), New York Magazine, and Blackbook Magazine, articles in the New York Magazine about Gawker and the world of blogging. There is also an audio story on National Public Radio. These sites then lead me to more articles such as the one written by Gould's former boyfriend for the New York Post Page Six Magazine, as well as Gould's two blogs, and postings and stories by and about her that predate New York Times Magazine essay.

Attention and the Worrisome Benefit of Shifting Boundaries

It remains to be seen how long Gould is able to retain the attention she is currently receiving. The circle she currently moves in, referred to as the "creative underclass" (Grigoriadis 2007) is akin to the Algonquin Roundtable of the 1920s with its penchant for sharp-tongued critiques of their fellow Manhattanites and especially of those who hold some level of social, economic and political power. Whether a Dorothy Parker or Robert Benchley arises out of the group remains to be seen[1]. Regardless of Gould's future, I suggest that her current prominence as a blogger is a result of her exploitation of oversharing. In Agger's (2004) terms, oversharing is the result of the breakdown between the pubic and private sphere. However, where Agger was concerned about the incursion of the public into one's private space, the propensity for oversharing has switched the direction and results in the intrusion of those things once known only by a select few people into the public sphere.

This returns us to Lankshear's and Knobel's (2001; 2007) point that blogging and other forms of new literacies in an attention economy results in new definitions of privacy. This rethinking of privacy is reflected in New York Times Magazine editor, Gerry Marzorati's defense of his decision to run Gould's story. He firmly placed her story within the larger questions that are facing today's young adults.

> One of the things we are most interested in at the magazine are those lifestyle issues — what we call Way We Live Now issues — that blend personal narratives with larger political or ethical or philosophical concerns. These are the kinds of things readers are engaged by on Sunday morning (or anytime, in cyberspace). How the Internet is re-describing how we

> understand privacy, intimacy and personal history is, I think, such an issue... (http://www.mediabistro.com/fishbowlny/news/ 2008 paragraph 2, June 20, 2008) [emphasis added]

Marzorati and the New York Times Magazine statement shows an understanding of the changing nature of today's world as brought about by the Internet, and this interest is, I suggest, a move toward building public discourse about the nature of the world in a participatory way.

Gould's story can be seen as encompassing both of the perspectives toward privacy: that of the world pushing in and that of the personal pushing out. For instance, the interview with Jimmy Kimmel, Gould attempted to defend the way the public intrudes into the private world of celebrities through a site such as Gawker Stalker. She argued that the definitions of public and private space are changing and that Gawker Stalker represented "citizen journalism." Kimmel rejected Gould's claim about the changing definitions of privacy and another guest countered Gould's point about citizen journalism by arguing that journalism requires a level of fact checking and integrity that Gawker Stalker lacks. Gould's argument was that in this age of ubiquitous digital media, no one should assume that his or her actions in public are private and that no one expects a site like Gawker Stalker to be fact checked. Kimmel's response to Gould deteriorated into a personal attack on Gould's character.

This exchange, conducted in public on CNN, encapsulates Agger's (2004) point about the boundaries of the public and the private as well as the breakdown of the boundaries between text and the world and the decline of discourse. First, Gould suggested that Gawker Stalker is an example of citizen journalism and that readers do not expect those postings to be fact checked. Although Gawker Stalker is indeed an example of participatory culture in that anyone can contribute, it also exemplifies that unfiltered or at least unconsidered postings do little to add to our understanding of the world and society and instead turn participation into a voyeuristic exercise. The second issue raised in Kimmel's interview of Gould is that of the redefinition of privacy and the intrusion of the public into the private. Kimmel objected to Gould's argument that no one, regardless of whether they are a celebrity or not, should expect not to be a potential target for surveillance when they are in a public place. Whereas Agger is concerned with the way electronic media allows the work world to push into one's home life, Kimmel's and Gould's argument raised the issue of what constitutes the right of individuals in public space. Is private space only within the walls of one's home, or does it extend to one's everyday activities in society? Kimmel argued that it does, and Gould claims that in today's world of digital technologies, it does not. Finally, the inability of Kimmel to sustain a civilized dialog about the issue without descending into a personal attack points to Agger's argument that discourse is declining.

If we examine the issue of privacy raised in the Kimmel/Gould exchange through the lens of Lankshear's and Knobel's (2001) argument that the onus of managing privacy is now on the one who receives attention we see that Kimmel's objection carries little weight. According to the ethos described by Lankshear and Knobel, celebrities in public spaces are responsible for managing how the public sees and approaches them. However, we are also responsible for determining what to let in to those spaces we can control. Sites like Gawker Stalker exist only because we contribute to them and read them.

As stated earlier, maintaining privacy and the separation of public/private space is an act of balancing the push in of information against the seeming need to push out in order to maintain a public presence within an attention economy. At this point, I turn my attention to the issue of pushing the private into the public sphere. This matter was not raised by the episode between Kimmel and Gould, but is the one that is the most salient in Gould's New York Times Magazine essay. I suggest that based on an analysis of her essay and those things that have been written about her and the members of the creative underclass, Gould has gained attention and built her career by masterfully manipulating the phenomenon of "oversharing" or by letting people know intimate details of her life and those who associate with her.

Although she projects an aura of ingenuousness during the Kimmel interview and in the pictures that accompany her New York Times Magazine essay, Gould (2008) is not naïve. She recognizes that oversharing is related to the pressures of the attention economy as well as to the media culture.

> It's easy to draw parallels between what's going on online and what's going on in the rest of our media: the death of scripted TV, the endless parade of ordinary, heavily made-up faces that become vaguely familiar to us as they grin through their 15 minutes of reality-show fame. No wonder we're ready to confess our innermost thoughts to everyone: we're constantly being shown that the surest route to recognition is via humiliation in front of a panel of judges. (Gould 2008a:2) [emphasis added]

If this is the case, then the distance and reflection called for by Agger (2004) is antithetical to success in an attention economy. The old ways of gaining attention and building a reputation are too slow in a fast capitalist

world. In her article, Gould notes the different path her career could have taken had she stayed in a job with a traditional publishing house. She writes, "At my old job, it would have taken me years to advance to a place where I would no longer have to humor the whims of important people who I thought were idiots or relics or phonies" (Gould 2008a:3). But she also notes that in her job at a traditional and respected publishing house she would have been mentored and allowed to make mistakes whereas in the world of Gawker, she was given the opportunity for a meteoric rise and the means to attack those whom she once would have had to answer to, but she had to do so under high pressure and without guidance. Of that pressure, she writes,

I was judged solely on what I produced every day. I had a kind of power, sure, but it was only as much power as my last post made it seem like I deserved. Sometimes I worried that I'd been chosen not in spite of my inexperience but because of it. Hiring women in their early 20s with little or no background in journalism was a tactic that worked for the site's owner twice before, and I expected to be a victim of the same kind of hazing my predecessors were subjected to as they learned how to do their jobs — and how to navigate New York — in public. (Gould 2008a:3)

Although Gould was pushing her private life into the public sphere, she did so as a reaction to the pressure of the attention economy. In her essay, she admits to have exhibitionist tendencies as early as high school, but as a high profile blogger on a high profile website, this propensity was rewarded. She had to write posts that gained attention as measured by page views and by comments, and if her estimation of the impact of reality television and media culture on youth psyche is correct, she had to overshare in order to achieve her goal.

It appears that Gould has managed to gain a level of attention and build a career in an economy where attention is scarce. Her experience almost seems orchestrated to move her career forward. As New York Magazine notes,

> It's almost part of Gawker's business plan to ensure that its young writers, by attracting the attention of those they are sniping at, are able to leap into the waiting arms of the mainstream media before they become too expensive to employ (Grigoriadis 2007:1).

While that may work well in the moment for those young writers, in the long run we need to ask, what are the implications of rewarding such attention seeking and the breakdown of boundaries for society and for the development of a participatory culture in which participation means contributing to the betterment of the human condition rather than the betterment of one's personal bankroll or ability to get into trendy night clubs?

The reactions to Gould's essay indicate that her perspective and approach to blogging is not universally valued within the blogosphere. For instance, one critic of Gould worries that readers will consider Gould's perspectives as representative of all bloggers. An anonymous author writes of the fear "that people will mistake her perspective on the Internet, writing, and fame as the perspective of an entire generation of bloggers" and that "Some bloggers are able to write about things other than themselves (New York Daily Intel 2008:1). This critique of Gould points to a disagreement of the purposes for blogging. As Mortensen (2004) notes, blogging individualizes the universal, but to do so effectively without being overly self-referential requires a distance and reflection. Gould (2008), however, writes that blogging is a way to maintain a record of one's existence.

> I think most people who maintain blogs are doing it for some of the same reasons I do: they like the idea that there's a place where a record of their existence is kept — a house with an always-open door where people who are looking for you can check on you, compare notes with you and tell you what they think of you. Sometimes that house is messy, sometimes horrifyingly so. In real life, we wouldn't invite any passing stranger into these situations, but the remove of the Internet makes it seem O.K. (Gould 2008a:2)

Research indicates that Gould's drive to blog as proof of one's existence is common (Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht, and Swartz 2004). Nardi et al. (2004) found that the primary reasons for blogging among the young, affluent bloggers they interviewed were 1) documenting one's life; 2) expressing emotions, 3) providing commentary and opinions, 4) articulating ideas through writing, and 5) forming and maintaining community. Consistent with Nardi et al's (2004) findings and Mortensen's (2004) argument that being a blogger means being part of something bigger than oneself, Gould (2008a) notes that at first her blogging helped make New York City feel more manageable and that those people who commented on her blog became friends of sorts even if she did not know them personally. I propose that this need to maintain a public record of self and form online communities may be a reaction to the alienation brought about capitalism and the increased pace at which today's workers are expected to make their mark on the world if they are to maintain their place as symbol analysts and knowledge workers rather than being displaced to the insecure backwaters of the service sector (Gee 2000b). This proposition may be a theoretical leap, but I suggest it is one worth exploring in future research.

Despite claims of the need for community, attention appears to be the prime reason for blogging. Gould (2008a) writes that even being insulted by strangers felt good because someone was paying attention to her. She critiques Julia Allison, another former Gawker and blogger for "naked attention-whoring" but recognizes that this drive for attention becomes addictive even if it is negative or vitriolic. Blogging, she claims becomes an obsession.

> The will to blog is a complicated thing, somewhere between inspiration and compulsion. It can feel almost like a biological impulse. You see something, or an idea occurs to you, and you have to share it with the Internet as soon as possible (Gould 2008a:9).

But she also acknowledges that this drive to record every thought results in an unfiltered view of one's life. In her New York Times Magazine essay, she writes of how "a single blog post can capture a moment of extreme feeling, but that reading an accumulated series of posts will sometimes reveal another, more complete story" (Gould, 2008a:10), and in her Heartbreak Soup blog she writes,

> When you write about things as they're happening — which is what most people do on blogs — you lose perspective, or rather, your perspective shrinks, so that only a tiny slice of your reality gets recorded. The cumulative impact of several months' worth of posts can lead to an entirely different conclusion than a few snippets taken out of context. This is the danger of blogging and also its seductive charm. It's so easy and fun to report on your current state of mind and your opinions, especially when you have strong feelings, and strong feelings are also fun to read about....Unfettered self-expression has its drawbacks, though. Like: what if you change your mind? What if you learn some things that make you feel entirely differently about that person, that movie, that guy? The version you recorded is still perpetually available, making you seem wishy-washy or, worse, like a liar if you flip-flop now. Your problem now becomes that the most popular result of a Google search becomes "the truth," even if you'd like it to be otherwise (Gould 2008b: paragraphs 3-4)

In these two excerpts, Gould recognizes the need for distance and analysis and almost echoes Agger's (2004) argument about the need for distance. Granted, Gould's examples are mundane as opposed to a consideration of cultural, political, or sociological issues, but she does recognize what is gained when the reader takes the time to review the whole of an author's work. The next step then becomes recognizing how a person and their ideas as reflected in their writing develops over time and in relation to the social, cultural, historical, and political contexts in which it was written and in which it is being read.

Toward Reflection, Distance, and the Promise of Participatory Culture

Participatory culture can mean simply tossing casually created texts into the abyss of the Internet and hoping someone will take note, or participatory culture can mean that growing numbers of people are taking the time to think and write about ideas. The reaction to Gould's essay provides hope that authorial distance and reflection required to achieve this may be occurring. For instance, The Huffington Post (Sklar 2008) quotes one commenter to the New York Times Magazine essay as writing, "Don't you have important things to do? Don't you have real issues to write about that might affect your generation and the country generally?" (p. 1), and Haber (2008) of the New York Observer criticizes her for a lack of sociological insight. Gould (2008) herself provides some evidence of philosophical maturation. She writes,

> Lately, online, I've found myself doing something unexpected: keeping the personal details of my current life to myself. This doesn't make me feel stifled so much as it makes me feel protected, as if my thoughts might actually be worth honing rather than spewing (Gould 2008a:10).

It is this idea of "honing rather than spewing" that is key to resisting the breakdown of discourse discussed by Agger (2004). In blogs such as Gould's and websites such as Gawker, texts flow into the world (Agger 2004) without any distance between the initial thought and the publication of that thought. The critics of Gould, and as we can see from the previous excerpt, even Gould herself, are calling for some distance and a renaissance of discourse.

This is not to say that we should eschew the personal if it serves to make concrete the abstract. Literature, regardless of the cultural tradition from which it arises, is at heart voyeuristic but is so for a purpose. The literature that stays with us does so because the human stories that grasp our attention are placed within the larger stage of societal conflicts and questions. What is missing in the self-referential writings that populate the blogosphere is the failure to venture beyond the self to make the connections to the larger world.

Although Gould's story is just a small, specialized snapshot of the blogosphere, the ways Gould manipulated the breakdown of public and private space and the attention economy in order to build a level of notoriety and thus increase her salability as a writer illustrate how blogging (or any Internet tool that provides access to public space) works within a fast capitalist, information based economy. In order to survive, if not thrive, information needs to be shared quickly and without review, vetting, or guidance. Mentoring is almost nonexistent in that those with experience in this fast capitalist, attention economy are themselves young and new to the field. As a result of this pressure, texts, in the form of blogs, are sent out into the world and consumed without consideration of how they fit into the larger picture of a person's life or society. As evidenced by the reaction to Gould's essay, there does appear to be some backlash against this trend. Writers and commenters are calling for deeper thinking and are starting to ask harder questions. We also need to begin to be selective as to what we let into our lives and to take time to consider what we send out into the world.

Lastly, we need to remember that the byzantine blogging world of Emily Gould and the New York media is but one part of the blogosphere. A view of blogging informed by a new literacies perspective shows us that blogs are becoming an increasingly important force within the world of the early 21st century. If we view blogging as a social practice, it has gained meaning in the political world as well as in the personal world. Blogging is growing as a form of dissention in African countries (Barber 2008). In Egypt, Iraq, and China among other countries, bloggers have become such a force that they are being jailed for what they are writing (BBC News 2008). In the United States, bloggers have attained press credentials (Sipress 2007), and brought down media icon Dan Rather for false reporting (Kurtz 2004). Educators are also seeking ways to incorporate blogging into teaching as a way to foster the development of writing skills (Repman 2005), learn languages (Ducate and Lomicka 2005), foster deeper learning (Ellison and Wu 2008; Wassell and Crouch 2008) and rethink and come to new understandings of what authorship and engaged reading means (Wilber 2007). Although educational uses of blogging have thus far proven to be problematic (Downes 2004; Knobel and Lankshear 2006), those educators who see blogging less as a writing assignment and more as a way to engage students in the world may have more success.

> "If a student has nothing to blog about, it not because he or she has nothing to write about or has a boring life. It is because the student has not yet stretched out to the larger world, has not yet learned to meaningfully engage in a community" (Downes 2004:24).

Downe's point is one we need to bear in mind, not just for education but when thinking about participatory culture and Web 2.0 in general. The attention seeking behaviors of people like Gould, the lack of reflection and distance evident in the texts floating about on the Internet, and the deterioration of private space can be taken as the individual having yet to learn how to engage in the world of ideas. The emergence of participatory culture allows us to resist the decline of discourse and intellectual engagement, through the affordances of Web 2.0. We can learn to "meaningfully engage in a community" (Downes 2004:24) and mentor those in our communities as a way to resist the alienating forces of fast capitalism and the siren call of the attention economy.

Endnotes

1. The Algonquin Roundtable was a group of journalists, editors, actors, and press agents who met daily for lunch at the Algonquin Hotel in New York City during the 1920s. They were also known as the vicious circle and included writers Dorothy Parker and Robert Benchley who were writers for the magazine, Vanity Fair. Parker, who started off as a theater critic, was known for her caustic wit, and was fired from Vanity Fair for offending too many producers. She later became a prolific poet and short story writer and published in Vanity Fair, Vogue, and The New Yorker. She later moved to Los Angeles and became a screenwriter whose accolades include two Academy Award nominations. Robert Benchley was a humorist who wrote for the Harvard Lampoon, The New Yorker, and Vanity Fair. He also wrote screenplays and received an academy award for the short film, How to Sleep. (http://www.algonquinroundtable.org/ accessed June 27, 2008)

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"Say It Loud, I'm Black and I'm Proud": Organizing Since Katrina

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Introduction

In 2005 Hurricane Katrina swept across the Gulf Coast and New Orleans. Thousands of people, mostly Black people, were unable to leave New Orleans as the flooding destroyed their houses and left them to fend for themselves on roofs, on bridges, and in the Superdome. Millions of people from around the world sent clothes, food, and other assistance to the people of the region. Many of the hardships they endured reminded us of the Middle Passage and slavery as family members were separated from each other, people were lost in the water, and thousands of people were sent places with little or information about where they were going or what they would do once they got there (Harriford and Thompson, 2008). The disaster laid bare decades of racism and classism as those with the fewest resources were the least likely to be able to protect their families and their property, hold onto jobs and health care benefits, and gain access to vital recovery resources. While the disaster threw us back in time—to the history of slavery in the United States—the organizing since Katrina has catapulted us forward, with activist strategies that both draw upon the race and class consciousness of the 1960s while extending a reach transnationally. This organizing is providing a multiracial, feminist, model of organizing that we believe is both unprecedented and transformative.

Double Consciousness after Katrina

One of the most striking contradictions that emerged during and after the hurricane was the lack of leadership from the government in response to the crisis, while the people of New Orleans demonstrated breathtaking acts of courage and community in order to try to save themselves. The Bush administration, including Condoleezza Rice, refused to see racism as key in leaving people to fend for themselves. Her unwillingness to identify with the poor and black people who were displaced in New Orleans led us to lament that Rice is among a growing number of black and Latino conservatives who have lost what, in 1903, W. E. B. Du Bois termed "double consciousness"—a collective conscience that cannot be separated from one's roots. For black people double consciousness is a simultaneous sense of oneself as dynamic and evolving along- side the sense of being despised. Double consciousness requires recognizing oneself as both African and American, as both denied fundamental rights and capable of seeing the pathology of such denial, as both misinterpreted and misrepresented.

Juxtaposed to Rice's lack of double consciousness was the consciousness we saw among many people in New Orleans. For example, for many days after the flooding, elderly men sat in front of their houses refusing to leave even as officials were threatening them that they must abandon their land. The elders knew that, as free human beings, they had a right to determine their own lives and deaths. If they were going to die, they would do so in their own homes, rather than in a stranger's land. These men were manifesting a consciousness that Du Bois identified when he wrote The Souls of Black Folk, a consciousness that is connected to land and ancestors. He tapped into black souls, the collective, intimate, historical, and spiritual connections that tie black people to each other across oceans, rivers

and levees—a consciousness the elderly men from New Orleans were protecting.

Another quintessential example that showed the link between double consciousness and historical memory could be seen on the murals adorning the exterior of the Ernie K-Doe Mother-in-Law Lounge. The namesake for this beloved club, Ernie K-Doe, is perhaps best known for his famous 1961 song, "Mother in Law," hence the name of the club, along with his avant-garde style and sense of self.[1] One mural on the outside of this club, which re-opened around the first anniversary of the hurricane, shows two men and a woman, all from the African Diaspora, who are in a circular embrace that also includes a large egg, a parrot, and a handkerchief with a peacock design.

This mural, like double consciousness, is reaching back and forward at the same time, back to the Caribbean and other stops along the slave trade route among people whose blood has mixed on more than one continent and forward to a jazz club in its latest incarnation. Historical memory is communicated in song, as a medium that got people through in the fields, at the washboard, in their runs for freedom, and in the haunting look in one of the men's eyes painted on the mural—a soulful yearning, an intensity and a relaxation, a wondering and an immediate presence. Another mural of an elderly woman stands above the first on the wall of the connected building, watching over the mural below, keeping eye on the neighborhood in its current transition. There is an interconnectedness to the images, even though they are on different walls, perhaps painted at different times. Meanwhile, a man on the second rung of a ladder is working on a new mural on another side of the building, painting into concrete, new memory.

Keeping Women Central

These two early examples of resistance by the people of New Orleans run counter to the dominant narrative in the mainstream media and elsewhere that portrays them as passive and helpless in response to the crisis. Organizing following Katrina also quickly revealed that any long-term effective activism was going to need to keep women at the center of focus. Through the Katrina catastrophe, women faced many of the same hardships men faced: losing their houses, being separated from their children, and witnessing the government's disregard for their humanity. More than a million people were forced to leave New Orleans and the Gulf Coast after Katrina and as many as 50,000 homes had been demolished within a year (Dreier 2006). But women were vulnerable to additional dangers as well. This reality gives example to the work of historian Darlene Clark Hine, who asserts the need to account for black women's "'fiveness': Negro, American, woman, poor, black woman" (1993:338). We need to comprehend this fiveness to understand the impact of Katrina. Women were vastly overrepresented in the shelters, locations that put them at risk of many hazards, including rape and other sexual assault. Without the protection of family and community, women were especially at risk of sexual exploitation. To make matters worse, amid these and other dangers, women had no privacy that would give them a chance to pull away from the crowd, regroup, make sense out of their own reality, and begin to recover so that they could put on a brave face for their children again.

Thrown into chaotic public spaces, black women were exposed emotionally, physically, and sexually in ways largely undocumented. In overcrowded shelters, they had to tap into their deepest resources to simply function. They had few, if any, economic resources to aid them in this process. Since so many women were forced to depend upon men—who have the power to both protect and exploit—many faced compromised relationships in the aftermath of Katrina in ways reminiscent of how they were cornered on slave ships, in auctions, and on plantations.

The frightening parallel to the vulnerability women faced post-Katrina is the danger that black women faced historically when they had to develop both a private and a public persona so that they could survive. Katrina recreated a southern history of black women without access to property—women who were themselves property, at the mercy of men willing to further exploit them. Black women were, again, in situations where men could take advantage of the only property the women had—their bodies.

Darlene Clark Hine identified a coping strategy that black women have historically adopted as a "culture of dissemblance" that includes "behavior and attitudes…that created the appearance of openness and disclosure, but actually shielded the truth of their inner lives and selves from their oppressors" (1995:380). One of the characteristics of the culture of dissemblance is that black women are silent about much of what they endure. After Katrina, while some black women told their stories on television and through print media, there was a haunting silence about the depth of their experiences. This dynamic is why literary scholar Ann duCille refers to black women in the post-civil rights era as simultaneously hyper-visible and super-isolated (1994:605). Their resistance to telling the totality of their experience stems from their concern about being further stigmatized or associated with long-standing demeaning

stereotypes of black women. This concern only adds to the silences about racialized sexual abuse and other injuries that they are especially vulnerable to during crises. Katrina showed us the need to envision a time when black women do not need to dissemble in order to make it through their days.

An understanding of consciousness that accounts for race and gender is one that refuses to trump exploitation primarily aimed at women with terror aimed primarily at men. African-American studies scholar Hazel Carby has documented that "the institutionalization of rape of black women has never been as powerful a symbol of black oppression as the spectacle of lynching."[2] Katrina underscores the need to recognize race and gender and poverty as equally powerful factors in twenty-first century disempowerment. The realities of black women's lives, including the multiple enforced silences about privatized domination, mean that journalistic accounts of the aftermath of Katrina tended to focus on black men's vulnerabilities while sidelining black women. The Katrina disaster amplifies why double consciousness needs to be expanded to account for multiple traumas that black women faced historically—and face currently. We also need to highlight the strategies of resiliency black women have developed.

The vulnerabilities that Black women and other women of color faced following Katrina led INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, a national organization of radical feminists of color, to work closely with the regional chapter in New Orleans. As Janelle L. White (2005), an INCITE member from New Orleans wrote soon after the hurricane, "Progressive activism surrounding the recovery of New Orleans must be driven by the most marginalized members of New Orleans and must center its analysis on race, class and gender."

This political awareness underscores the import of the New Orleans Survivor Council, an organization made up of people from poor and working-class Black communities. While both men and women make up this organization, many of the leaders are women. Most housing leases had been in women's names before Katrina and, after Katrina, women were often the ones fighting to be sure that their children had housing and schools to attend. The New Orleans Survivor Council activism included occupying the HUD building on August 28, 2007 (the second anniversary of the hurricane), demanding a list of public housing units that will be opened, and organizing a "Bring our People Home" festival. They also initiated the "Bad Neighbors Campaign" which protested the property seized by the government and identified the inequity that existed when the government allowed certain businesses and non-profit organizations to remain in "blighted areas" even as renters and public housing community members were forced out. The fight for safe and affordable housing is a key feminist concern and a long-term strategy so that poor women and women of color no longer need to uphold a culture of dissemblance in order to survive.

Organizing Among Immigrant Communities with a Transnational Focus

Organizing following Katrina also reflected the history of New Orleans as a profoundly multiracial, multi-ethnic city. The historical roots of New Orleans have always been multiracial. Before and during the colonization by the French and Spanish, Louisiana was home to many indigenous people, including the Chitimacha and the Houma (Malinowski and Sheets 1998). As a major port of the slave trade, New Orleans has also long had the feel of a city of the African Diaspora. As is true of much of the Diaspora, the multiracial culture reflects layers of slavery, colonialism, and immigration.[3] The Creole population of Louisiana is a blending of French, Spanish, African, and Caribbean people (reflecting consensual relations between free blacks, Spanish, African, French, and Caribbean people, as well as a history of rape under slavery). Creole, a language spoken by many people of African and Caribbean descent, is a blending of French, African, and Caribbean languages that have been spoken in the region for centuries.

In the twenty-first century, Louisiana is the home to people of African descent, many of whose families have been in the area since the slave trade; white people of European descent (German, Spanish, French, English, Irish, etc.); Houma, Biloxi-Chitimacha, and Choctaw native people; and many recent immigrants (primarily communities of color). These immigrants include Hondurans, who first immigrated to the area in the twentieth century to work in the ports and fisheries; Vietnamese, who immigrated to the area in the 1970s following the Vietnam War; and recent Jamaican immigrants.

One reason that the media representation after the hurricane portrayed a city in black and white terms is that many other people of color (Native Americans, Hondurans, Vietnamese, and Jamaicans) had little or no contact with mainstream media or state and federal emergency agencies. The situation of the Honduran community provides a useful case in point. Approximately 120,000 Hondurans lived in the New Orleans area at the time of the crisis (Goodman 2005). Many of the Hondurans were legal residents and have been in the United States for a long time,

some for generations. Some Hondurans came to New Orleans in 1998 after Hurricane Mitch that left 10,000 people dead and many more homeless (Goodman 2005). Those who were not legal residents had no access to resources from FEMA. Many without residency were afraid to seek help—either to be evacuated or after the hurricane—for fear that the border patrol or immigration officials might turn them over for deportation. Even those who were residents were afraid, many of them unable to get access to documents that would prove their residency. A similar scenario of vulnerability existed for Jamaican immigrants; many did not seek help with evacuation or food or shelter following the disaster for fear that they might be deported. For the Honduran and Jamaican communities, the suffering they experienced reflected a combination of barriers to emergency help.

The reporting on recent immigrants and native people by alternative media sources documented their ingenious methods of helping themselves through the crisis. Five hundred members of the Tunica-Biloxi community in central Louisiana took refuge at a casino in the region; nearly 20,000 Vietnamese fled to the Hong Kong strip mall in Houston, where Vietnamese charity groups provided shelter, food, and clothing; Koreans found refuge in family-run Korean stores in Houston; and Hondurans sought out a Honduran restaurant in Houston's mostly Latino neighborhood (Atlan 2005; Norell 2005). All of these groups avoided the Superdome, seeking community-controlled networks instead.

The Jamaicans, Hondurans, and Vietnamese in New Orleans ask us to include nation and citizenship in organizing since Katrina. Their realities ask us to account for how immigration—often a response to colonization in a country that leaves few options for people other than to flee their homes in search of work—shapes consciousness as well. Gloria Anzaldúa (1987), a Chicana theorist offers such a conceptualization through her multilayered analysis of the culture, history, and politics of people living in the Southwest of the United States. Much of what she examines in relation to that border resonates with the realities facing immigrants living in New Orleans. Anzaldúa describes the border between the United States and Mexico as "una herida abierta" (an open wound), "where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds" (1987:3). The immigrants living in and around New Orleans, who came to the United States in large part because of First World colonization of their lands, give example to Anzaldúa's reference to "una herida abierta." For the immigrants without documentation, bleeding after the hurricane came from knowing that they had contributed much labor to the United States, many for years, and yet did not see U.S. services as an option in a time of crisis.

Anzaldúa asserts that the psychic, linguistic, and geographical location of those sandwiched between cultures nourishes what she has named "mestiza consciousness." Anzaldúa writes, "From this racial, ideological, cultural and biological cross-pollinization, an 'alien' consciousness is presently in the making—a new mestiza consciousness, una consciencia de mujer. It is a consciousness of the Borderlands." (77). This consciousness comes from a melding of two realities—in this case the reality of one's country of origin and the reality of the new country—into another, that is larger than the sum of its parts.

Like Du Bois's double consciousness, mestiza consciousness recognizes a clashing of cultures and power inequities. To the equation of slavery and racism, Anzaldúa adds the history of colonialism that creates internal struggles within people's psyches, what she has named "psychic restlessness" (78). This state is characterized by "mental and emotional states of perplexity" as well as "insecurity and indecisiveness" (78). This restlessness comes from the willingness and sometimes the necessity to juggle multiple worldviews simultaneously.

Anzaldúa's mestiza consciousness has vertical and horizontal dimensions made possible by living a multicultural reality. While Du Bois assumed a dichotomy between black and white and a linear relationship between two warring poles, Anzaldúa's mestiza consciousness is more like a balloon that has been inflated by wind coming from many directions. For Anzaldúa, who recognizes herself as a creation of indigenous, white, and Mexican blood, linear frameworks were not big enough to describe her consciousness.

Because mestiza consciousness takes into account identities that cross borders and are not solely determined by ones national belonging, Anzaldúa allows us to think about how—in a disaster—people remember themselves as connected historically, emotionally, and psychically. For example, following Katrina, Jamaican workers faced fears of deportation if they sought services, yet returning to Jamaica was no real option given the grinding unemployment in that country (largely due to foreign capital intervention).[4] The United States war in Vietnam resulted in the immigration of South Vietnamese to many communities in the United States. The settlement of Vietnamese refugees in Louisiana began after the fall of Saigon in 1975, facilitated by Catholic charities in the region.

There is also a long history of connection between people of African descent in New Orleans and Haiti. A vertical interpretation of New Orleans is one that focuses on the relationship between white and black people. A

horizontal interpretation allows us to see the multilingual, multicultural history of New Orleans and demands that we think beyond national borders.

After Katrina, Haitian American writer Edwidge Danticat raised questions about the many political and media pundits who expressed shock at the devastation after the levees broke by saying that New Orleans looked more like Haiti than the United States. Danticat observes, "It's hard for those of us who are from places like Freetown or Port-au-Prince not to wonder why the so-called developed world needs so desperately to distance itself from us, especially at a time when an unimaginable tragedy shows exactly how much alike we are" (2005:25). Danticat continues, "…we do share a planet that is gradually being warmed by mismanagement, unbalanced exploration, and dismal environmental policies that might one day render us all, First World and Third World residents alike, helpless to more disasters like Hurricane Katrina" (26).

Mestiza consciousness is also a crucial concept for understanding the political dynamics of rebuilding New Orleans. In 2004, Bush proposed his "compassionate immigration plan," which included a three-year "guest worker policy" aimed particularly at Mexican immigrants. Anti-immigration activists opposed this policy because of their long-standing opposition to immigration from countries with brown and black people. Progressives opposed Bush's plan, seeing it as a way to introduce a labor force that could be easily exploited and used to undermine union safeguards. Given the opposition from at least two directions, Bush tabled this proposal until after Katrina when he announced that Congress should pass the previously tangled bill. His logic was that the rebuilding of New Orleans would require labor far surpassing what was currently available from domestic workers (Campbell 2005).

Mestiza consciousness offers an important intervention into Bush's plan, since it recognizes connections among and between communities that, in political wars, often get pit against each other. As most of the large-scale contracts for rebuilding were quickly granted to companies outside the region, working-class communities, mostly communities of color were forced to compete against each other for jobs, housing, and other fundamental resources. The recent transnational history of New Orleans reflects layers of colonialism, war, and natural disasters. The multilingual, multiracial, multi-ethnic composition of the city is reflected in the uneven and complicated story of how various communities fared following Katrina.

Since Katrina, approximately 100,000 workers of Latino, Native-American, Asian, and African-American descent came to New Orleans and the Mississippi coast for work. This is an example of fast capitalism as contractors quickly tapped their transnational networks to find workers.[5] Their treatment, in many cases, has been miserable as they have been forced to live in abandoned cars, work in toxic conditions, receive inadequate wages, and run from immigration authorities who have intensified their harassment since Katrina while labor laws have been relaxed. At the same time, hundreds of thousands of New Orleans residents have been denied access to meaningful work, denied access to the expanding labor market in their own hometown. The New Orleans Worker Justice Coalition (2007) is a multiracial group that focuses on empowering workers by organizing day laborers while expanding workers' rights statewide. At a point when migrant workers and local black workers could easily compete with each other, the New Orleans Justice Coalition focuses on the common struggle of workers for dignified work.

Organizing since the disaster asks us to expand consciousness beyond the black/white dichotomy that is the foundation of much work on race in the United States. Just as an analysis of race without gender is insufficient to understand the dynamics of organizing after Katrina, a black/white analysis of race in New Orleans is unable to fully identify who was victimized by the storm and how the federal government proceeded following the disaster.

The International Tribunal: A Model for 21st Century Organizing

The two characteristics of organizing embodied in the work of survivors following Katrina—a focus on women and a transnational lens—were both central in the strategy and priorities of the International Tribunal on Hurricane Katrina and Rita that was held in New Orleans on the second anniversary of the hurricane. This Tribunal was the culmination of two years of intensive organizing on the local, regional, national, and international level.

In December 2005, approximately 2000 survivors and their supporters marched on City Hall demanding justice and the right to return home. In June 2006, activists erected a tent city outside of the St. Bernard Housing Development in response to the government's unwillingness to let them return home. During 2006, the People's Hurricane Relief Fund and many other grassroots organizations began to envision a people's tribunal that would draw upon international law. Since the local, regional and federal government had refused to provide basic housing,

health care, and education for the people of New Orleans, the activists recognized that they would have to draw upon international law regarding human rights violations, especially the right to return, that are guaranteed under United Nations policy on internally displaced people. Through a series of meetings in Atlanta, New York City, and New Orleans, that included both leaders from the United States as well as activists from many other countries (Venezuela, Brazil, Palestine, and elsewhere), the activists began to envision a tribunal that would draw upon the United States policy on internally displaced people as the basis of the claim.

Through the two years of organizing, the activists used the Internet extensively, to get the word out and nurture international connections. In the process, the organizers contradicted the "overwhelmingly negative view of New Orleans as a city of rampant crime, intense poverty, racial tension and other pathologies"— that the mainstream media had projected with stunning speed during the Hurricane (Gotham 2007). The Internet became an antidote to the mainstream representations of the media as the organizers built coalitions in support of the Tribunal.

In August 2007, about 500 people from across the globe met in New Orleans to demand that the U.S. government be put on trial for crimes against humanity. The crimes included removing thousands of people from the Gulf Coast, mismanaging resources set aside for Katrina survivors, refusing to adhere to policies pertaining to the security and well-being of internally displaced people. The national endorsers included a stunning array of grassroots activist organizations: The Center for Constitutional Rights, Critical Resistance, the ACLU, Black Workers for Justice, INCITE!: Women of Color Against Violence, and a range of other groups. The international endorsers included: support committees from Brazil, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Haiti, Ecuador, South Africa, Mexico, and Palestine; The Committee for the Right to return Switzerland, the Afro-Venezuelan Coordinating Committee, and the Committee on Asian Women in Bangkok. The language of the Tribunal drew heavily on international law, referring to the survivors as victims of crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and genocide. The goal of the Tribunal was to demand restitution, advance the Rita–Katrina construction movement, and build a global campaign against the U.S. program of ethnic cleansing.

The Tribunal took place in a hotel three blocks from the revived French Quarter. When Diane (who attended the meeting) entered the convention center, she had an immediate sense of déjà vu, as if she were time traveling. The presence of African clothes; natural, not processed hair; the requisite left wing book tables with posters of Malcolm X, Che and Mandela; and most importantly, a sense of urgency and outrage were reminiscent of much activism of the 1960s. This presence made her immediately aware of what she had been missing in United States based organizing in the last 30 years. While the event reminded her of the best of 1960s organizing, it also felt unprecedented. While the Black, Latino, and Asian activists of the 1960s and 1970s had always envisioned an international scope, in reality, their focus was overwhelmingly domestic. At the Tribunal, activists from all over the world had come—from South Africa, France, Brazil, Cuba, Turkey, Pakistan, Taiwan, and many other countries. People were speaking in many different languages, while standing in solidarity with the people of color and poor people in the Gulf region. They recognized that even though the survivors were from the United States, the richest country in the world, they were poor people whose displacement was strikingly similar to displaced people in their own countries.

The actual tribunal involved two days of testimony by survivors represented by a prosecution team (from seventeen organizations including law schools, human rights organizations, and legal organizations) and tribunal judges (that included lawyers, judges, professors, and trade union activists from eight different countries). Each survivor testified for between 30 minutes to over an hour while the lawyers asked them questions. Those testifying included retired school teachers, community activists, laborers, residents of public housing, people who had been jailed in the aftermath of the crisis, teen leaders, and others. This multiracial group—including Native Americans, African Americans, Hondurans, Peruvians, white people—spoke about the theft of cultural rights (for example, the loss of the Mardi Gras Indians educational and cultural center); the pollution of the soil making it impossible to plant seeds or allow children to play outside; the precipitous increase in asthma since Katrina; the denial of FEMA services; the physical abuse and disrespect of people in the Superdome by the national guard and more.

When the survivors testified, there was a hush in the audience; there was the decorum of a courtroom. There was no laughing or talking as people told of the often horrifying and frightening degradations they and their loved ones had lived through. The culture of dissemblance that Darlene Clark Hine (1995) identified as a long term strategy that black women have developed in order to protect themselves in public spaces fell away as one woman after the next spoke openly and passionately about the stress she lived with during and since Katrina. The structure of the Tribunal made such truth-telling possible, since those testifying were granted the dignity of being able to speak for themselves and those who could not be present. Those testifying did not feel endangered of being trivialized or

misunderstood. They were listened to, their stories were documented both in writing and in video and, there was an understanding that their stories resembled those stories of countless others as well.

Implications of the Tribunal for Organizers and Social Movement Scholars

There are several reasons why we believe that much scholarly attention needs to be paid to the Tribunal. First, the structure of the Tribunal reframes those who lived through Katrina from being seen and treated as victims to being recognized as survivors. While both the mainstream media and researchers run the risk of talking about and for the people of New Orleans, the Tribunal makes clear that people are speaking for themselves.

Second, the Tribunal offers a model of organizing that moves beyond national boundaries and toward the concept of world citizen and human rights. Many movements historically in the United States have been reform movements where the aggrieved party has looked to the government to redress discrimination. Grassroots organizers saw the dead end in attempting to rely upon the U.S. government to provide adequate resources. As a consequence, they are reaching way beyond the domestic government, to an international body, while building a movement among grassroots organizations from all over the world.

Interestingly, the strategy taken up by the Tribunal makes immediate links to the works of political prisoners and their allies, who, for the last twenty five years, have increasingly looked to international law to oppose racially disparate sentencing and torture in prison. It was precisely because the United States does not recognize the category "political prisoner" (although there are over 150 political prisoners domestically) that U.S. political prisoners and their allies had to reach beyond domestic law in their organizing. Similarly, the government was not recognizing the people of New Orleans as having a legal status. They were not treated as U.S. citizens. They are clearly not refugees since they are residents within their own countries. And, the people of New Orleans refused to see themselves as victims. The legal category that most accurately describes their status is "internally displaced people" which is a category that the United States does not recognize. If the government did recognize this status, it would have to provide housing, education, and health care for internally displaced people. Without that recognition, the People's Hurricane Relief Fund and other organizers of the Tribunal had to reach to international law for legal recognition.

Not coincidentally, one of the first institutions to be reestablished by state and federal officials after Katrina was the network of jails in New Orleans and the outlying areas. With the Tribunal, the strategy of survivors of Katrina and political prisoners has converged, opening up new models for alliance building. Similarly, the fact that the activists organizing the Tribunal drew heavily on the forward thinking Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa speaks volumes to international alliance building, to a willingness, in fact eagerness on the part of U.S. activists, to learn from organizing outside of its national borders.

Third, because the Tribunal is, by necessity focusing on housing, the organizing is attending to the private and public sphere simultaneously while keeping women at the center of analysis. While the Civil Rights Movement often put its focus on the public sphere—voting, school desegregation, public transportation, and public eating—the organizing around housing now is helping to keep women central. To a large extent, this organizing centers on women being able to hold their families together. Women are at the heart of the movement for regeneration. This movement is about the public and private space, a reality that moves us beyond social movement research that focused on private or public space but not both.

Fourth, the methods used to organize the Tribunal speak to ways that the Internet and other sophisticated media sources can be used to undermine mainstream media operations. Through videos and the Internet, the Tribunal organizers contradicted mainstream media representations. The activists who envisioned the International Tribunal, like the organizers for the Jena 6, used media sources in ways that wrestled free of the dominant narrative by putting grassroots organizing at the center of the frame of reference.

Fifth, the Tribunal is the first time that African Americans have been able to link a domestic issue to international law and have been able to make alliances with such a multiracial community. This is not the first time that Blacks have sought an international forum to redress their problems. For example, in the 1950s William Patterson approached the UN for redress against lynching. But this initiative did not have support of a grassroots Black community. Since few Black people at that time had access to international travel, they had little awareness that people outside of the United States, including an international body, such as the UN might rally on their behalf. Since the Civil Rights movement, increased international mobility and the emergence of the Internet has enabled more Black people to

see organizing internationally as a real strategy. The International Tribunal was the first time that Blacks sought international recognition with the support of grassroots black communities. We think this support has occurred, in some measure, because the Internet and satellite television has allowed black people to see beyond their world even if they cannot travel outside of the United States—to see themselves as part of a diasporic African community and not simply as internally colonized people. This change demonstrates one way that globalization has affected black communities as black people are seeing themselves as citizens of the world rather than as second-class citizens in the United States. We expect, and hope, to see more of this consciousness in the years to come.

Endnotes

1. For many years, Ernie K-Doe adorned himself in a cape and referred to himself as the emperor of the universe. When he died in 2001, he was buried with his mother-in law, who he was very close to, and his second wife, Antoinette, vowed to keep the club open in his name. In 2006, following the hurricane, Antoinette ran him for mayor, professing that Ernie K-Doe was the only one qualified for the job. She made t-shirts that she sold and then forwarded the proceeds to organizations that helped musicians get back on their feet following the hurricane.

2. Quoted in Darlene Clark Hine, "Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women in the Middle West: Preliminary Thoughts on the Culture of Dissemblance," in Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought, ed. Beverly Guy-Sheftall, 380 (New York: The New Press, 1995).

3. Before the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, Louisiana was settled by the French under Spanish rule. The French ceded Louisiana to Spain in1762, regained it in 1800 and then sold it to Thomas Jefferson in 1803.

4. A long British colonial presence in Jamaica, followed by multiple invasions and interventions by the United States and increasing exploitation by foreign corporations in recent years, have left Jamaica vulnerable to losing its citizens to the United States and other countries in search of employment.

5. In our reference to fast capitalism we are drawing upon the work of Ben Agger (2004) and others who analyze how information and technology, with capital as its fuel, are increasingly linking and complicating lives across the globe.

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Exploring the Liquid Politics of Tourism: Developing Reflexivity in Backpacker Discourse

Rebecca Jane Bennett

Buoyed by three A-levels and a place at university, Jonty and Bunty and a quarter of a million of their mates set out to save the world. First, they went climbing in Kathmandu. Then they stumbled into a local school and taught English to baffled Nepalese. Fifty spliffs and a thousand emails later, they returned home with a Hindu charm and tie-dye trousers. They had lots of great stories but the world remained thoroughly unsaved.[1] P. Barkham, 2006.

[Backpackers climbing the Inca Trail: Author's own image][2]

Introduction

'Lonely Planet? They do books for backpackers': I've felt obliged to correct that misconception almost as many times as I've had to answer, 'What's your favourite place?' We're not strictly a backpacker publisher. We publish books for almost every market segment, from young family groups to city weekend escapees, Tokyo business travellers to Africa safari explorers.[3]
— Tony Wheeler, Lonely Planet Co-founder, 2005.

In their recent autobiography Once While Travelling[4], Tony and Maureen Wheeler – cofounders of global travel-merchandise label, Lonely Planet[5] –narrate their journey from scruffy 'world' travellers to multi-million dollar business moguls. Reflecting on thirty years of travel – "from twenty-something backpackers with no money but a passion for travel to fifty-something owners of a multi-million dollar company, still with the same passion"

[6] – the Wheelers have continued trekking around the globe, despite natural disasters, political conflict, war, famine, terrorism and global warming. The pathway to economic success that follows their travels in literary landscapes and global markets means that the founders of a travel label closely linked with backpacker tourism have beat one of the rarest tracks in an increasingly interconnected globe; the one that leads to becoming part of the miniscule percentage of multi-millionaires world-wide.

Lonely Planet's exponentially manicured fingers reach across a spectrum of tourism products including glossy hard cover 'coffee table' books[7], 'shoe string' budget travel guides[8] and, more recently, a 'green' travel[9] guide catering to a globally warming eco-market. This leading publisher in popular tourism pedagogy claims to have the knowledges and resources to safely 'guide' an array of tourist consumers – from budget to luxury – through unfamiliar cultures, customs, people and products. For over three decades, the Lonely Planet brand has ventured 'off the beaten track' into remote pockets of the globe. It has made millions whilst challenging tiny local economies to sink or swim in a global tsunami of free-market-shares and capitalist sensibilities that make up Bauman's apt metaphor of the dynamic global economic climate as being in a state of liquid modernity[10]. Mirroring Lonely Planet's success is the figure of the backpacker: a contested tourist image with connotations of youthful hedonism, left-wing ecological rhetoric, and the embodied practice of hiking and camping simulating colonially reminiscent explorations into remote and dangerous destinations. Investigating how backpacker tourism has, over time, morphed into an image that supports and exemplifies fluid global power structures offers a critical framework to assess the continual marginalization catalyzed and maintained through tourist mobility.

Focusing on the 'popular' pedagogic realm of tourism critiques the paradoxical faces of Otherness available for backpacker consumption. Sadar states that "Orientalism is very much alive in contemporary cultural practice. All of its main tropes have been seamlessly integrated into modernity."[11] Liquid modernity translates Orientalist tropes into a paradoxical language that supports the marketing of difference as a pleasure by suppressing or denying its politics. Such imperialist and Orientalist travel narrations manifest themselves today in a globalised form in popular tourist discourse. Reading manifestations of the non-tourist Other in discourses readily available to the tourist-consumer finds that geopolitics is often cashed in at the departure gate. The desire to maintain colonial power through staking a claim in the tourable 'unknown' has lent backpacker discourse the power to manipulate paradox and politics, transforming poverty, civil conflicts and terrorism into enticing, experiential products available for the consumer looking to purchase shrinking virtual real-estate off the tourism industry's malignant beaten tracks.

Everyday independent, flexible tourism that loosely falls under a 'backpacker' umbrella requires interdisciplinary academic attention because it often masks the socio-political realities of the everyday lives of non-tourist communities, nations and individuals. O'Dell's argues that:

> If we are to truly appreciate the role that tourism plays as a force in society today ... there is a need to more systematically place the study of tourism within a larger cultural and economic context of the everyday life in which it is embedded.[12]

Placing a theoretical focus on uncomfortable and exclusionary aspects of backpacker discourse challenges popular tourist media to develop reflexivity in a political and academic arena. Reflexivity in backpacker discourse reveals a colonial-historical reiteration of fearful and/or exotic Others to sell the tourism product. Non-tourist voices, perspectives, politics and knowledges are often left out of images of the 'tourable' world.

Locals appear as pleasurable commodity or feared savage, justified through a leisure-driven, tourist-centric, re-writing of colonial discourse using 'experience' capitalism and 'pleasure' politics as a 'new' imperial lingua-franca.

Written for tourists, by tourists, with little or no agency given to local-host perspectives, the popular knowledge-base about the 'world' conflated in non-fiction travel 'guidance' is skewed in favour of the tourism industry. Over-writing, re-writing and transforming the politics involved in meetings between spatially and socially disparate individuals into inherently desirable experiences denies oftentimes extreme economic and cultural gaps between local hosts – who directly or indirectly set a scenic backdrop for, or cater to tourist consumers – and pleasure-seeking global guests. Knitting together an arbitrary pleasure-politics division in global geopolitics infuses tourist movements with meaning and justifies theoretical assessment of backpacker discourse.

Metaphor to Metonym: Re-focusing Tourist Studies:

In addition to economic attempts to prevent tourist dollars from 'leaking' before they reach local populations

and individuals who service the industry, and ecotourism projects that encourage more respectful and ecologically-based tourist destinations, studies of tourism might also look for ways in which to change popular narratives about tourism. Aiming to change what Phipps surmises as "the common sense assumption that tourists are, by definition, innocent of the implications of global geopolitics"[14] moves towards a more socially just tourist culture. For tourism planners, writers, marketers and tourists to assess the implications of their actions requires a basic understanding of global geopolitics and the critical resources to make connections between tourism and global power.

[Shadow of tourist taking photo of local: Author's own image] [13]

Tourism is not as simple as its market surface promotes. Popular and academic literature on the topic must attest to its complexity.

Despite multiple theoretical investigations into accelerating capitalism[15], mobility theory [16] and liquid modernity[17], academic critique is rarely aimed directly at the tourism industry[18] . Holden worries that,

> ...perhaps with the exception of economics, the application of the social sciences to the investigation of tourism is relatively weak compared to other areas of social enquiry.[19]

Critical readings of popular tourism discourses and associated tourist identities address a theoretical 'weakness' in tourist studies. A critical sociological approach to tourism is supported by Urry's statement that "mobilities as both metaphor and as process are at the heart of social life and thus should be central to sociological analysis."[20] However, a theoretical distraction with tourist metaphors enables corporeal tourism –including the texts, bodies and products that form a popular pedagogy about the 'tourable world' – to promote tired tales about 'authenticity'[21], 'colonialism'[22], Orientalism[23] and self-liberation[24] . Tourism's original referent is under-theorised. In contemporary critical sociology and Cultural Studies it appears that travel metaphors take precedence over 'actual' tourism in the form of the 'nomads'[25], 'vagabonds'[26], 'post-tourists'[27] and 'virtual-tourists'[28] . Moving tourism theory beyond the metaphorical, independent tourism praxis becomes a persuasive and popular re-articulation of colonial narratives inter-woven with a mobile and increasingly powerful 'culture of consumption'. The function of mobile sociological metaphors in relation to the metonymic function of bodies and identities they directly refer to requires further investigation.

Searching for inclusive, critical and thoughtful manifestations of tourism discourse requires a focus on tourism-in-process. Viewing tourism as a metonym for larger global forces calls for a change in popular pedagogy that might promote greater geopolitical literacy and cultural sensitivity amongst the class of people across the globe with the 'power to tour'.

Liquid Tourism

Tourism – as a signifier – was mobile before it became a popular and pervasive metaphor for contemporary conceptions of the global. It is pre-globalisation as a defining discourse. Tourism thus has relevant historical

applications in mobility theory because it signified mobility when the modern world was composed of significantly more fixed signs. Now that modernity is transforming, tourism-as-process has been lost in oceans of global significance, and thus has gotten away with discursive, ideological and structural exploitation of non-tourist cultures and individuals.

Bauman writes of an ideological and structural shift running parallel to the emergence of globalisation as a defining discourse in recent times. He eschews the infinitely paradoxical, postmodern assumption that a modern era that favoured universal discourses, Fordist production lines, and overtly binary logic, is over. Bauman suggests that the present global climate did not replace 'old' capitalist models of power with 'new', open, flexible, heterogeneous and equivocal global networks. He posits that:

> The society which enters the twenty-first century is no less 'modern' than the society which entered the twentieth; the most one can say is that it is modern in a different way.[29]

Modernity, he argues, has not ended. It has changed its shape. Modern history is still being written, capitalism persists, and economic, national, classed, raced and gendered conflicts and discriminations have not been resolved; but they have become slippery and difficult to articulate. The modernising process continues, yet it appears harder to read. Bauman highlights that the molecules – the basic building blocks of modern power – have not altered. However, the visible matter of modern power has changed from solid into liquid form as we enter a phase of liquid modernity.

Examining the overlap between Bauman's liquid modernity theory and the colonial processes of defining the Self by claiming authority over geographically and/or ideologically distanced Others[30], critiques liquefied Orientalist structures in backpacker popular culture. Tourists are not the only identities involved in tourism; there is a less often recognised infrastructure comprised of immobile locals and people at work instead of leisure. The Other side of the tourist coin – the local or worker – are given limited scope. As Balibar states:

> The other scene of politics is also the 'scene of the other', where the visible, yet incomprehensible, victims and enemies are located at the level of fantasy.[31]

Voices of non-tourists are relatively invisible or imaginary in backpacker discourse. They appear as travel commodities rated on a scale of tourist satisfaction or as exotic and engaging characters that set the scene for brave and adventurous colonial narratives that place the traveller as hero/protagonist. The travel scene is rarely set in reverse with tourists in the background and local voices in the fore. Considering the way the 'scene of the Other' is configured (or omitted) in backpacker theory and popular culture invites political discussions into a pleasurable realm. Leisure and pleasure have been allowed to shy away from politics for too long, given the histories of domination and power that inform leisure practices and discourses. Historical trajectories of power and marginalisation are visualised – and reflexivity is encouraged – when the Other scene in tourism is given as much political weight as the backpacker 'scene of the Self'.

Backpackers exercise their 'right to mobility' through a 'rite of passage' which is available only to globalized classes. Such a 'rite' is exclusive and directly related to global power. Mobile global tourist power is signposted by a series of immobile localities. Without fixed places to leave behind, travel mobility is indistinguishable from home. The ability to travel for pleasure is far from universal in its reach; however, liquid dominant tourist discourses often overlook fixtures that allow fluidity to appear 'new'. The absence of solid modern signifiers describing macro-political differences in tourist popular memory suggests that backpackers are no longer seeking to 'find' themselves in travel narratives, as much as they seek to lose themselves in an ephemeral world of seemingly endless difference, novelty, newness, diversity, experience and in-between-ness. The 'difference-loving' post-tourist does not have to shoulder blame for uneasy encounters with Others when they can move on to sample a more tasty delight. The liquid tourist, however, offers a more critical conceptual frame.

Easily adapting in a liquid modern economy, late-capitalist independent tourists oscillate between beaten and unbeaten tracks, camp-sites and five-star hotels. Backpacking does not necessarily denote budget travel or scruffy students. The Lonely Planet cofounders' narrations exemplify paradox in the contemporary tourism market's 'liquid' consistency. Wheeler writes that:

> Although I still sample backpacker places every year (in some places there is no alternative), I also have a taste for hotels where rooms come with their own swimming pools.[32]

Here, the interchanging of tourist labels is shown to be easy and desirable. To stake a claim off the tourist map requires certain luxuries to be relinquished. Reading Wheeler's luxury-backpacker identity from a post-colonial

perspective finds that the dualism enables concurrent colonial trajectories to be re-traced. Five-star tourism – while re-enacting a master-slave colonial narration where local hosts play servant roles catering to high-paying to tourists' individualized whims – does not simulate colonial narratives that proffer to 'boldly go where no one else has gone before'. Five-star tourism requires infrastructure and hosts that are acutely familiar with their guest's needs so there is not much opportunity to experience wild and seemingly 'un-civilised' territory as 'brave and adventurous' imperial explorers[33]. It appears that backpacker tourism in a liquid modern market offers an avenue through which a post-colonization of local spaces can be re-enacted for pleasure, regardless of age or income. In this way backpacker destinations can be seen to add flavor and adventure to liquid modern five-star tourist identities, as well as maintaining youthful, budget focused, and independent connotations. A malleable and fluid marketing label and tourist signifier, backpacking offers an ideal example of a liquid modern product.

Backpacking and Power

Malleable, individually customized tourist modalities – travels outside of temporally and spatially bound 'package tours' – visualize Bauman's articulation of post-millennial modern power. He suggests that:

> The prime technique of power is now escape, slippage, elision and avoidance, the effective rejection of any territorial confinement with its cumbersome corollaries of order building, order-maintenance and the responsibility for the consequences of it all as well as of the necessity to bear their costs.[34]

Independent tourism offers an escape from the territorial confines of 'home', as well as 'away' for those who can afford the time and currency to embark on an individualized leisure journey. The power to 'escape' from responsibilities and limitations in fixed localities and enter a 'care-free' trans-local space is envisaged in the flexible mobility of contemporary backpacker travel modalities.

Squeezing complex global and structural theory into a brightly colored backpack positions tourism as a metonym for global power. Applying post structural and post-colonial critical methods directly to tourism texts develops a reflexivity that implicates tourist classes in the unequal distribution of wealth, access and power. Critiquing backpacker movements through popular culture finds evidence in support of Urry's premise that:

> There are not two separate entities, the 'global' and 'tourism' bearing some external connections with each other. Rather they are part and parcel of the same set of complex and interconnected processes.[35]

Given the rapidly changing and often contradictory readings of the globalization trope's relevance and definition, the correlation between global inequality and global tourism can appear complicated, blurred or suppressed. However, visualizing the interdependence between market liberalization, flexible post-Fordist capitalism and the increasing presence of tourists across the globe provides further insight into the unequal distribution of wealth, access and agency that persists through solid and liquid phases of modernity. Richards and Wilson find further correlation between globalization and tourism. They state:

> Globalisation not only increases the speed at which cultures are marginalised, but also increases the speed with which the tourist can travel. The presence of tourists around the globe is not only a sign of the progress of globalisation; it is also an integral part of the globalisation process.[36]

If global movement results in the marginalisation of particular voices, economic classes, religions, nations, and cultures then tourism is implicated in the marginalization process. Configuring the mobile, independent tourist as a flexible consumer with freedom and agency to manipulate time, space and mobility into pleasurable leisure pursuits develops a classed backpacker discourse with the potential to overwrite local destination specificity and politics. Isolating the backpacker image as being representative of a mobile and shifting tourist class system allows themes of global and local interaction in an individualizing, consumer driven, post-Fordist leisure environment to be explored through a familiar and accessible cultural site.

Backpacking: Pleasure and Politics

To don Urry's 'tourist gaze'[38] shades is to know that access to mobility-as-pleasure will not be denied. The

liquid modern foundations of tourist experience, however, offer no guarantee that spontaneous – instant – pleasures will last. When pleasure is found in the act of movement it cannot be contained and is therefore an insecure goal. The fun-loving 'post-tourist' mentality thriving in globalized cultures is coupled with uncertainty. Bauman posits that individualized, pleasure-driven tourist mobility is a sign of insecurity as well as affluence. He states:

> We now travel without an idea of destination to guide us neither looking for a good society, nor quite sure what in the society we inhabit makes us listless and eager to run.[39]

Independent travelers are not necessarily searching for a 'better' society, a 'better' culture, or a truly authentic and exotic Other to colonize, poach and own. In liquid modernity, backpacking appears to be an intricate form of navel gazing. Globalisation's push for individualism, niche-marketing and independence fragments tourist visions of Other nations and cultures that were once viewed as 'unified' communities or political realities. Consequently, readings of Otherness are liquefied into a collection of individualized additions to a global melting pot. Macro economic, political and structural inequalities are skimmed off the surface of travel landscapes, because they make for a bitter tasting tourist broth.

The Pleasure Product

It seems that in an unstable, divided and politically fractured global environment the consumer desire to seek out cultural differences for leisure purposes is strong. Lonely Planet co-founders, writers, readers and their generic offshoots, continue to traverse the globe in large numbers searching for pleasurable and 'safe' experiences of difference. The Wheelers, by choice or by luck, find themselves at a crest of liquid-modern power: Surfing a wave of experience capital. O'Dell states that:

> Experiences have become the hottest commodities the market has to offer. Whether we turn on the television at night, read the paper in the morning, stroll down a city street at noon, we are inundated by advertisements promoting products that promise to provide us with some ephemeral experience that is newer, better, bigger, more thrilling, more genuine, more flexible, or more fun than anything we have encountered previously. At the same time, consumers are increasingly willing to go to greater lengths, invest larger sums of money, and take greater risks to avoid 'the beaten track' and experience something new.[40]

Tourism is an industry that sells 'experience'; backpacker tourism leads tourism discourse off the 'beaten track'. Examining the commodification of experience in the form of the tourism product finds that individuals, communities and nations that play host to experience-hungry tourists are translated into a market-driven simulacrum of tourist representation. Non-tourist Others' agency, politics and life experience are transformed into signifiers for exotic difference, pleasure, excitement, knowledge and/or risk. Local destinations become disembodied, free-floating signifiers that allow global consumers to custom-design a tourism product that meets individualized expectations. From this critical perspective, independent tourist discourse manipulates images of Otherness to write customized narratives about the tourist-Self at the expense of political agency or authority of hosts over their own destination.

While refurbished 'reds under the bed' fairytales evoke localised fear, global trans-national movement for pleasure extends its reach through tourism. Globalisation power and ideology are poured into suitcases, travel guides, brochures, websites, hostels and backpacks as citizens take an apolitical break from the harsh realities and fears associated with their country of departure and the 'newsworthy' political landscape. Bauman warns that "the main vehicle of this particular political economy of our times is the escape of power from politics."[41] Backpacker tourism, in this light, might be configured as an escape vehicle. Backpacker imagery creates a safe and exciting world full of pleasurable, educational and new attractions for the global tourist. Proffered as being outside of politics and political globalization, backpackers carry the power of the market by simulating a global utopia where nations, classes, cultures and landscapes are united by a common bond.

A thorough understanding of the diverse, yet uniform, manifestations of power agency and access that give some global citizens the power to tour over Others who cannot is not yet prevalent in backpacker theory, media or practice. Backpacker discourse neutralizes intercultural exchange with appeals to an economically rationalised happy universalism. Wells, cites Price's,

> Universality Principle... that is ... most strongly promoted by companies such as Coca-Cola and Benetton. They present a happy world with people of all shades of colour smiling to each other into the camera.[42]

This principle underpins happy globalization rhetoric and is also evoked to promote global tourism: images of the multicolored blissful world where diverse cultures, religions, creeds and races put their differences aside and recognize their shared 'humanity' through passing around a can of Coca-Cola and a Big Mac. The inside-cover of Lonely Planet's Blue List 06 – 07 publication reads:

> Lonely Planet believes travellers can make a positive contribution to the countries they visit; both through their appreciation of the countries' cultures, wildlife and nature, and through the money they spend.[43]

International travel enacts a global egalitarian dream by displaying happy Otherness. The 'money they spend' pays for the cast, crew and script for the Benetton backpacker world. Tourist marketing disallows uncomfortable, difficult and angry host imagery because underlying problems and powers in the industry are in danger of being realised and challenged. An unhappy local host can devalue a destination by reducing its desirability for global consumers. Global – local interdependence is vital in areas heavy with backpacker traffic. To ensure economic survival, hosts work with the tourist industry to mask 'evil' and dissenting images of Otherness in discourses and interactions designed to promote – and profit from – the tourism product.

Terrorism and Tourism

The so-called 'War on Terror' and the invasion of Iraq are based on ideological, rather than physical differences. Terror attacks within powerful global and capitalist icons, such as London and New York, mean that the evil-Other is as likely to be living next-door as overseas. The seemingly all-pervasive threat of evil has arguably allowed physical distance to maintain pleasurable connotations in politically insecure times. The eagerness for cross-border travels to remain associated with leisure and pleasure is reflected in the, relatively brief, amount of time it took for international tourists to take flight again after the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York on September 11, 2001. The World Tourism Organization responded to 9/11 rapidly. They stated that:

> The impact of September 11th confirms the World Tourism Organisation's initial analysis. Countries perceived as being close to the conflict, countries heavily dependent on US traffic, and areas dependent on long-haul air traffic clearly suffered the most.[44]

However, the title of the World Tourism Organization's report as soon as April 2002 suggested that 9/11 was nothing more than a 'glitch' in the global tourist industry. A claim to be able to see "the light at the end of the tunnel"[45] only six months after the terror attacks indicated that world tourism shifted its focus away from the United States, but the global spread of tourism continued in other forms and directions. The WTO report states:

> It is clear that; overall, the situation of world tourism is improving. However, as we predicted in earlier papers, there has been a significant redistribution of traffic.[46]

Mobility represents an escape. Once global 'foreigners' were marked, tourists could avoid 'terror' hotspots by moving without giving up a pleasurable re-enactment of the colonial experience of 'discovery'. Terrorism discourse easily visualised or contained 'Others to be feared' in clearly labelled destinations and political debates. The WTO report on the impact of the September 11 attacks on tourism states that their Crisis Committee was "quickly renamed the Tourism Recovery Committee during its first meeting to emphasise its positive and constructive intentions" [and that at the first meeting] "confidence was expressed in tourism's proven ability to bounce back after crisis."[47] The tourist industry's ability to 'bounce back' from crisis is embedded in its ability to clean up, wash off and polish the political world and package it as an egalitarian and unusual product.

Despite the apparent ideological separation between pleasure tourism and politicized terror-ridden globalization, terrorism adds fuel to independent tourists' desire to travel off the beaten track and go places where many would not dare. In the Lonely Planet Blue List 06 – 07 terrorism has been rewritten as a political justification for tourist movement and as a testament to the bravery and commitment of the independent leisure traveler. Travel writer Don

George writes that, in the wake of global terror attacks:

> Travellers seem to have made peace with the truth that life is uncertain and instable wherever they may be, and seem to have recommitted themselves to travelling no matter what may happen.[48]

Lonely Planet uses terrorism to 'set the scene' for a re-writing of the brave, fearless and adventurous colonial explorer narrative. The terrorist-Other reaffirms the traveler's power and determination in the face of adversity. George suggests that travel continues, "clearly in part a gritty defiance of the terrorists' goals of disrupting global commerce and communication and propagating intercultural distrust and fear."[49] Terrorism is rewritten into a narrative that maintains tourism is paradoxically a political act, whilst remaining politically neutral. Such narratives deny an unbreakable alliance between backpacker tourism and the capitalist market that invented the travel genre.

The tourism industry powers on in the face of fear: globalization's dominance continues in the face of terror. Tourism and terrorism are intimately tied. Terrorism determines the direction of both mainstream and backpacker tourist trails. It creates exotic danger, or a redirection of traffic. It also gives tourism a political edge. Website We are Not Afraid (WNA) encourages global citizens to continue to travel to destinations in the aftermath of terror attacks and to travel to dangerous destinations in spite of terror attacks. The site stated in October 2005:

> It has happened. We were born out of the London attacks, Now another round of three bombs have taken their toll, once more in Bali. It seems there are 20 dead and many injured. If their aim is to intimidate tourists and isolate Indonesia, let's show them that we are not afraid. Please send your pictures and make your statements ... we will be running a special gallery of pictures we have already received from Bali.[50]

The personal pain that inspired this website overpowers investigations into why terrorists are targeting globally successful citizens. We are Not Afraid suggests that tourism is an appropriate political response to insecurity and fear, undermining terrorism academics Lutz and Lutz's suggestions that "acts of violence are designed to create power in situations in which power previously had been lacking."[51] Terrorism is horrific, brutal and violent. It is a desperate act by the disempowered to have their opinions heard in the global cacophony of accelerated capitalism. WNA encourages tourists to go to New York, Bali, Madrid and London and take photos of themselves defiantly having 'fun' in sites of global terror attacks. Reconfigured into a tourism advertisement, We are Not Afraid asks global consumers to transform terrorism sites into tourist attraction. This display of 'political protest' empowers the liquid modern backpacker market by manipulating localised political conflicts into sought after 'experiences'. Overwriting discomfort in the celebration of access to mobility, liquid capital and experiential robs the unhappy local of agency and allows an accelerated and liquefied re-enactment of colonial domination fuelled by new capitalist, rather than military, might.

Dangerous Destinations: The 'New' Unbeaten Tracks

In a profit-driven paradoxical re-packaging, political conflicts in local destinations offer a renewed niche in the Lonely Planet's continued saturation of the independent tourist market. To read the 06-07 Blue List it would appear that dangerous destinations represent unbeaten tourist tracks in globalization. Sights of political unrest are useful for backpacker consumers looking to appear as more adventurous and fearless than 'ordinary' tourists. Travel to foreign places, where the threat of attack looms, simulates the colonial explorer conquering savage landscapes and inhospitable natives.

Six years after the terrorist attacks on the United States in 2001, tourist consumption is promoted in defiance of globalization's political, ideological and savage 'evil-terrorist' Others. Lonely Planet – founded and based in Australia – includes Nepal, Colombia, Indonesia, Israel and Yemen[52] in its list of recommended 'places to go' in 2006 and 2007. All five destinations had travel advisory warnings placed on them by the Australian government in the recommended time period for travel. The website Smart Traveller advised "against all travel"[53] to Nepal and advised "to reconsider your need to travel"[54] to Colombia, Indonesia, Israel and Yemen in April 2006. Lonely Planet's encouragement to travel to places that are considered a danger to tourists confirms that backpacker discourse maintains a desire to go places where mainstream tourists might not.

Backpacker discourse's desire to isolate itself from the rest of the tourist market and to bravely go where no

other travelers will dare is shown in the positioning of Afghanistan in the 06 – 07 Blue List. The home of September 11's publicly demonized instigator, Osama Bin Laden, is revered almost as an 'ultimate' backpacker destination. Afghanistan toped the Australian Government's 'do not go' list in 2007.[55] The Blue List publication heeds this warning by agreeing that that Afghanistan is an un-safe destination.[56] Despite a warning in the later pages, however, Lonely Planet cofounder, Tony Wheeler, includes Afghanistan in his personal 'Blue List' for the coming twelve months. It is also rated as number three on a "Tough Travel Destinations" list with the blurb:

> Its people are friendly, its countryside is beautiful, it's blessed with an impressive history and rich and diverse culture, but ... Afghanistan post-Taliban, is still a country to be avoided by the casual backpacker.[57]

This statement implies that for super backpackers like Tony Wheeler, Afghanistan is a fine place to travel. It appears that the terror warnings, imminent danger and local people that violently oppose a tourist presence form an ideal destination for the flexing of backpacker muscle. Rather than being labeled as a place to be avoided, Afghanistan appears as the ultimate backpacker destination. It turns backpacking into an Xtreme sport where 'terror-travel' joins 'base jumping' and 'cliff diving' as a travel experience offering an extra rush.

Conclusion

From terror warnings to global warming tourism appears to surge on unfettered and unfazed by moral and real panics, natural disasters and environmental catastrophes. Unabashedly espousing the joys of owning Ferrari's and frequenting five-star hotels[58], the Wheeler's journey from backpackers to millionaires suggests that the more economic, cultural and geographical diversity is celebrated, gazed upon, consumed and enjoyed the clearer the pathway to global power, wealth and success. Lonely Planet has overcome the threat of terrorism to continue an economically successful journey. Re-imaging the attack on the World Trade Center in New York is achieved in a chapter of the Lonely Planet cofounders autobiography flippantly titled, "September 11 and all that"[59]. In this chapter, the events now referred to as "911" are written as a brief downturn in Lonely Planet sales, not as an indication that some citizens are vehemently unhappy with the global powers of which tourism is a part. A travel publisher that encourages individualized, independent, risky and unusual destinations, Lonely Planet promotes holidays that are not only relaxing, but also offer the experience of something new. Part of the reason for the Lonely Planet's success lies in a tourist hegemony that accepts an arbitrary blurring of the lines between pleasure and politics so the 'world' is transformed into a desirable liquid modern product for those who are able to tour.

Searching for uneasy and less-pleasurable relationships between backpacking and politics considers contributions that tourism makes to global inequalities, dangers and conflicts. New capitalist powers defy fixed definition and reflect chameleonic flexibility and adaptability in the face of contextual change. Backpacking offers a valuable theoretical metonym to assist in the attempt to politicise the stratified commodification of experience in consumer-driven globalisation. With the ability to turn danger, terrorism and sites of political conflict into leisure products for globally mobile elite, the backpacker label is as slippery and malleable as the fluid global economy that frames its paradoxical journey into the present. When viewed as a metonym – an integral part of prevailing global power structures – backpacker discourse is implicated in global inequality and discontent.

The lack of reflexivity – especially in seemingly neutral realms such as leisure and pleasure – amongst individuals to place themselves in direct relation to global power structures forms a blockage in the instigation of political, ideological and economic change. A realization that tourist movement is more than a distraction or form of escape – that it also represents a powerful currency in globalization – helps unblock avenues for reflexive and open views to political change. As Jameson writes:

> The results of these lightning-like movements of immense quantities of money around the globe are incalculable, yet already have clearly produced new kinds of political blockage and also new and unrepresentable symptoms in late-capitalist everyday life.[60]

When money loses material shape and form, experience is easily commodified. Solid, tangible, older, modernist powers appear to disappear in a whirl of seemingly 'endless signification'.[61] Familiar structural discrepancies persist between rich and poor, fed and underfed, housed and the homeless, Self and Other; yet to present such discrepancies as concrete and meaningful 'realities' in globalization discourse is increasingly difficult. The speed of global capital transactions and technological advancement does not appear to pause for political thought. Even the relatively powerful within the globalized context struggle to maintain and improve new technological literacies, trends and

complex hybrid identity formations. The speed with which technological change is presented makes possibilities for other kinds of lasting change (for example, economic, political or ideological change) appear beyond individual control. Tourism is a popular activity that necessitates face-to-face interactions between economically, religiously, linguistically, and geographically diverse individuals and can thus have serious political implications in a globally dominant world-view. Making independent tourism discourse more transparent necessitates a focus on the popular as well as the academic. Tourists cannot be encouraged to change their consumption patterns, expectations or behavior if they are not shown the global and ideological effects of such actions. Developing a reflexive approach to backpacker discourses has the potential to show tourism students (both inside and outside of university classrooms) that tourist popular culture is a serious force, and that tourist consumers are powerful global agents that can instigate political change through pleasurable activity.

A theoretical challenge in the search for inequalities and political ramifications in backpacker discourse lies in the attempt to remove the experiential shroud from an industry that, by definition, provides an arguably necessary 'break' from everyday fears, guilt, responsibilities, conflicts and worries for global middle classes. Comparing and contrasting tourism pedagogy in popular, as well as formal, contexts helps projects that aim to transform the tourist experience in to a more mutually-beneficial transnational leisure activity. Developing a critical and reflexive approach to backpacker discourse suggests that a greater potential for improving intercultural relations begins with embracing and exposing the multitude of ways the international tourist industry is implicated in the division of wealth, literacy and access on a global economic scale.

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The War between n+1 and the Elegant Variation, or When Production Overlooks Consumption in the Literary Political Economy

Elisabeth Chaves

The War between n+1 and the Elegant Variation

> "At a time when older forms of media are supposedly being swallowed up by newer ones, the impulse to start the kind of magazine Partisan Review was in the late 1930's or The Paris Review was in the 50's might look contrarian, even reactionary. If you are an overeducated (or at least a semi-overeducated) youngish person with a sleep disorder and a surfeit of opinions, the thing to do, after all, is to start a blog. There are no printing costs, no mailing lists, and the medium offers instant membership in a welcoming herd of independent minds who will put you in their links columns if you put them in yours. Blogs embody and perpetuate a discourse based on speed, topicality, cleverness and contention - all qualities very much ascendant in American media culture these days. To start a little magazine, then - to commit yourself to making an immutable, finite set of perfect-bound pages that will appear, typos and all, every month or two, or six, or whenever, even if you are also, and of necessity, maintaining an affiliated Web site, to say nothing of holding down a day job or sweating over a dissertation - is, at least in part, to lodge a protest against the tyranny of timeliness. It is to opt for slowness, for rumination, for patience and for length. It is to defend the possibility of seriousness against the glibness and superficiality of the age - and also, of course, against other magazines" — The New York Times (Scott 2005).

Many assert that the Internet has been and will continue to be a transformative space or medium. It overcomes the limitations of real space, diversely capitalism, restrictions of access, or authority (depending on whom you talk to), and creates a channel in which more voices can be heard. The nature or degree of this transformation will be discussed further below. Taking advantage of that alleged space for change are numerous literary weblogs or "litblogs." These relatively new places for literary critique and expression have multiplied like mad in recent years, resulting in the establishment of The Litblog Co-op, a litblog dedicated to "uniting the [self-described] leading literary weblogs [twenty-one to be exact] for the purpose of drawing attention to the [self-defined] best of contemporary fiction, authors and presses that are struggling to be noticed [presumably as defined by sales] in a flooded marketplace" ("The Litblog Co-op" 2007). This antiestablishment attitude and concentration on the independent, nonmainstream and overlooked is widely shared among the blogs, which number many more than the twenty-one self-positioned members of the co-op. By their own and others' descriptions, the combination of this rebellious spirit and scope of interest are what supposedly create the potential for transformation of the current book culture, or at a minimum, provide a space for the underdogs to reach wider audiences (Dotinga 2005; Keener 2005; "The Litblog Co-op" 2007; McLemee 2005; Press 2005; Tucker 2006; Rich 2007).[1] Further, the litbloggers themselves stand outside the establishment, or at least, separate enough to critique but sometimes to benefit from its workings, many lacking any direct ties with establishment institutions, although several in recent times have published reviews with print outlets.

As a result, the establishment (or the established print media that reviews books) have on occasion taken shots at these unwelcome upstarts. The establishment has built up its reputation as the repository of expertise, and it fears

the erosion of this status by the democratization (read dumbing down) of opinion that the litblogs threaten. They have historically determined what is good, what is bad, and what is mediocre. Moreover, they authenticate through their process of "expert" vetting creating what is accepted as true, and greater still, they produce the codes and conventions that constrain discourse through their editing. With the advent of on-line book culture, print media may lose its role as gatekeeper of what people are exposed to and presumably read. Surprisingly then, perhaps, the latest war[2] between the litblogs and the print media has occurred between a more established litblog, The Elegant Variation, [3] and the newcomer, anti-establishment print journal, n+1.

To label what is largely a heated exchange of words a war is probably an overstatement. It is more like a skirmish or even a scuffle. What determines the magnitude of a war anyway – its content or its effect(s)? However, the exchange has generated some heat (and incessant back and forth commentary from those involved and numerous others on several blogs).[4] Importantly, the fight questions the binary of Internet as democratic, antiestablishment space and print media as anti-democratic, establishment space. As the opening quotation claims, perhaps the real battle is over speed. The Internet allows fast publication of thought, which some argue is inherently faulty, while print media is slow and hence more thoughtful, which others criticize for its incongruity with our "fast capitalism" times. However, as this paper will argue, speed may not be the end of the story.

A Short Description of the Antagonists

Mark Sarvas, a self-described "contented defiler of prose" and published writer, is the author of The Elegant Variation, a litblog in existence since about 2003. (The nature of the Internet makes dating websites a difficulty). The litblog's title is a reference to author Henry Watson Fowler's term for the unnecessary use of synonyms to mean a single thing, or as Sarvas describes on his site, "the inept writer's overstrained efforts at freshness or vividness of expression" (2007a). The litblog provides the author's own reviews of featured books, guest reviews of books, general literary news taken from other media sources, and links to current literary events.

n+1 began in 2004 and is a political, cultural and literary print journal published twice a year. Keith Gessen, Benjamin Kunkel, Mark Greif and Marco Roth founded the journal in New York City and continue to edit it with the help of managing editor, Allison Lorentzen. They are also frequent contributors. Additionally, the journal maintains a website, located at www.nplusonemag.com, and is webmastered by Chad Harbach, also a member of the editorial board. The website offers some content not available in the journal, but none of the print edition's content is available on-line. The journal's name is described by Editor Mark Greif as a mathematical title that "invokes 'a series that doesn't come to an end' at a time when people speak of perfected democracy and the end of history" (Shapiro 2004). The journal's editors self-compare it, hopefully in modest aspiration, to the now defunct Partisan Review, a political and literary quarterly that ran from 1934 until 2003. n+1 was a 2006 winner of an UTNE Reader Independent Press Award in the Writing category.

The Scuffle

In the Winter 2007 issue, the fifth issue to reach the presses since the journal's inception in 2004, n+1 featured an article titled "The Blog Reflex: Blog Me with a Spoon." The article appeared in the opening pages of the journal, titled "The Intellectual Situation," an unauthored section presumably co-written by the journal's four founding editors. The short piece took direct aim at the litblogs.

"The Blog Reflex" began by decrying the nature of blogs in general – the "blogs" of corporate media, the negative effects of onslaughts of meaningless information, the failure of political blogs not to write but to link, and the commodification of blogs. The critique then focused its attention on the litblogs, likening them by a bit of an extension to Virilio's theory of the accident. Virilio's theory of the accidents produced by each new stage of technology is "what happens unexpectedly to the substance, the product or the recently invented technological object" and is "the hidden face of technological progress" (Redhead 2006). It may be interpreted as what should be predicted and prevented but what at the same time becomes impossible to predict and/or prevent in our sped up and globalized world. Here, the accident for n+1 appears to be the destruction of critical thinking on-line, the contingent result of the seemingly positive emergence of the blog, a new forum for anyone's expression.[5]

The n+1 piece had two main beefs with the litbloggers. First, the litbloggers were a big let-down. Rather than "democratize the intellectual sphere," they turned out to be "unwitting stenographers of hip talk and market speak" ("The Blog Reflex: Blog with Me a Spoon" 2007:6).

> The need for speed encourages, as a willed style, the intemperate, the unconsidered, the undigested. (Not for nothing is the word blog evocative of vomit.) "So hot right now," the bloggers say. Or: "Jumped the shark." The language is supposed to mimic the way people speak on the street or the college quad, the phatic emotive growl and purr of exhibitionist consumer satisfaction – "The Divine Comedy is SOOO GOOOD!"—or displeasure—"I shit on Dante!" So man hands on information to man ("The Blog Reflex: Blog with Me a Spoon" 2007:6).

The second critique rebuked the litbloggers for being wolves in sheep's clothing, labeling them "a perfection of the outsourcing ethos of contemporary capitalism," as they morphed into marketing machines with an "aura of indie cred" ("The Blog Reflex: Blog with Me a Spoon" 2007:6). Why should corporate publishers pay for marketing when litbloggers serve their interests for free? (Or mostly free – some bloggers do make money from advertisers, and most get free, advance copies of books.) n+1 finished off the litbloggers by in effect likening their community to a self-congratulatory group of publicity hounds that seek not just to advertise books but also to market themselves.

> So much typing, so little communication . . . It's incredible. A bottomless labor market exists in which the free activity of the mind gets bartered away for something even less nourishing than a bowl of porridge. And you can't dine off your inflated self-respect and popularity—not unless you get enough hits to sell advertising ("The Blog Reflex: Blog with Me a Spoon" 2007:7).

The blogs were quick to respond to the attack. A contributor to Long Sunday, a political theory blog, provided one of the earliest responses in mid-February, around the time that issue five came out. In essence, the poster, who goes by "CR," wanted to know if Long Sunday belonged to the category of litblogs that n+1 criticized. After following a post on another blog "and having clicked through to his links to actual 'litblogs,' I now can totally see n+1's point... I guess I was thinking that we are a litblog. Fortunately, that doesn't seem to be the case...." (CR 2007).

In early March, the litblog, The Millions, posted a long critique of the n+1 piece. The poster, Garth Risk Hallberg, both agreed and disagreed with n+1's characterization of litblogs. He asked, though, that n+1 refrain from becoming the subject of its own critique, namely making hasty judgments and foregoing reflective examination.

> Communication requires both speakers and listeners, and by making common cause with like-minded bloggers, n+1 might swell the ranks of the enlightened, rather than going the genteel way of the salon. To that end, its introductory essaylets would do well in the future to forgo simplistic binary code - Literary Blogs: Thumbs Up Or Thumbs Down? - in favor of sustained, thoughtful analysis (Hallberg 2007a).

Mark Sarvas at The Elegant Variation then linked to Hallberg's critique on his own blog:

> The Millions justly takes n+1 to task for its unsigned jeremiad "The Blog Reflex," about which more anon. What neither piece notes is how assiduously n+1 courted bloggers at its inception, and how thin-skinned its editors have been concering [sic] any criticism of their efforts. Also more of which, anon (Sarvas 2007f).

In subsequent posts, Sarvas reproduced e-mails from n+1 editor Keith Gessen in which Gessen responded to Sarvas's request for a copy of the journal's first issue with a description of the journal's mission and then in a later e-mail wondered if Sarvas had received the copy of the issue they sent and would be commenting on it in his blog. Sarvas hoped that these e-mails from Gessen would highlight n+1's hypocrisy in first courting litblogs and then later laying waste to them (Sarvas 2007c; Sarvas 2007d; Sarvas 2007e).

The posts on all three blogs, Long Sunday, The Millions, and The Elegant Variation, incited strong reactions from the on-line community, many from other bloggers with seemingly widely-read blogs. Many comments were submitted to each of the posts, especially to The Elegant Variation. Some of the comments took sides. Others gave critiques of the battle itself, ranging from criticisms of Sarvas's posting of supposedly private e-mails from Gessen to the battle's overall appearance of pettiness. n+1 editors, Keith Gessen and Marco Roth, both posted several comments (or rebuttals) in response to the posts on each of these blogs. In response to Sarvas's intimations that more e-mails from n+1 would be reproduced on his site, Gessen preemptively copied two more e-mails he had sent to Sarvas, self-described as a mean e-mail and an apologetic follow-up, into a comment on the initial post.

Sarvas's next and promised to be final response came in the form of a lengthy account of why he reacted as he did (which included some apology), why he disagrees with n+1, and why he is critical of n+1 as a journal (Sarvas

2007b).[6] He, like Hallberg, commented on the irony of n+1's critique of blogs that consisted of many of the same shortcomings they find in blogs—generalizations, lack of thoughtfulness, and hastiness to judge. Additionally, he characterized the journal as having "anger" as a mission statement. Sarvas provided an advanced copy of the post to the n+1 editors giving them the opportunity to comment before he added it to his site. Their response, prepared by Keith Gessen, was brief. He provided links to various print media pieces in mass audience publications that each of the editors had written, ostensibly to contradict Sarvas's criticisms of the quality of their writing. The written portion of the response was only "Yup, we're angry. There's a lot to be angry about. Now piss off."

The War Amplified: The Disappearing Print Review Struggles to Remain Vital

The dispute between n+1 and The Elegant Variation is positioned against a backdrop of a larger struggle to keep book culture's presence in major daily newspapers. While publications like The New York Review of Books remain alive and vital, their readership is only 280,000, a fraction of the Los Angeles Times' readership of 6.4 million (Wasserman 2007). However, the Times recently cut back on its book review section, joining it with another section, and promoting a larger on-line presence for book reviews. Only five national papers now maintain stand-alone book review sections and those too have diminished in size over the past twenty years (Trachtenberg 2007). After the Atlanta Journal-Constitution eliminated its book editor in 2007, the National Book Critics Circle (NBCC) began a "Campaign to Save Book Reviewing" that included a "Read-In!" at the AJC's headquarters and an on-going series on their blog, Critical Mass, featuring "concerned writers, op-eds, Q and As, and tips about how you can get involved to make sure those same owners and editors know that book sections and book culture matter" (Freeman 2007).[7] The NBCC's use of electronic media, and specifically, the blog form, to protest against the disappearance of book reviews in print demonstrates the complex relationship between electronic and print media.

Some finger pointing for the decline of book reviews in newspapers has been directed at the blogosphere, and the tension between print media and on-line reviewing also erupted into a nasty exchange in the United Kingdom (Cooke 2006). There, a literary critic for a national newspaper bemoaned the poor influence of the Internet on book reviewing. In response, a novelist and blogger fired back a sharp reply on her blog. Her thoughts were echoed by some others on-line, while a literary editor informed her that none of her future print publications would be reviewed, either positively or negatively, in pages of this editor's publication.

Steve Wasserman, a former editor of the Los Angeles Times Book Review, argues that newspaper book reviewing has never made money for newspapers and also has never reached a high level of quality, citing indictments against poor book reviewing made by James Truslow Adams in The Saturday Review of Literature in 1931, Elizabeth Hardwick in Harper's Magazine in 1959—Hardwick went on to help found The New York Review of Books in 1963—, and Jay Parini in The Chronicle of Higher Education in 1999 (2007). The disappearance and shrinking of these sections from newspapers in the last few years may then be just a part of the struggle for survival for print national newspapers in general as competition from television and on-line news decreases their circulations. Newspapers axe the sections to produce the least advertising revenue first. Book reviews in print media may in future only reach the comparatively limited audiences that subscribe to the New York Review of Books, The London Review of Books, The New Yorker, and like print publications.

The war between n+1 and The Elegant Variation and the decline of print reviews in national newspapers suggest a more complex problem for interested observers than simply the question what is the Internet's effect on literary criticism. In review, n+1's main criticisms of the litblogs included the following: first, their utilization of the Internet failed to democratize the intellectual sphere; second, they became promotion machines rather than critical beings; and third, they opened up new areas to commodification as they marketed themselves. n+1 laid the blame on the litbloggers as users of the Internet, criticizing the message rather than the medium, and perhaps overly focusing on the production of blogs as textual vomit rather than considering the audience of both these texts and their own.

The underlying question is whether the Internet acts as a space for transformation of our current literary political economy that has substituted exchange value for use value, regardless of the user or the user's intentions. Is literary culture on-line sufficiently different from the literary political economy that already exists in the off-line world? By focusing on the form of critical thought on-line, the role it may play as a practice of resistance, and its consumption or non-consumption, this paper hopes to provoke further discussion about the supposed democratizing effects of the Internet rather than continue the binary battle of print versus digital.

Beyond Binaries: What the War is Really About

Whether Content Can be Divested of Form

One criticism of the Internet is that it represents only changes in the form but not the substance of knowledge, communication, thought and so forth (May 2002). This judgment while arguably having much merit simultaneously diminishes the importance of form. If it is the case that the Internet only changes the form of discourse and not its content, then how much of a difference does a change in form make—enough of a difference to begin to change the substance? One of the primarily specified changes in form is speed and its effects. In fact, much of the debate between n+1 and the litblogs seemed to center on this issue. In simplified terms, the speed of the Internet allows for quick communication, and quick communication is inherently unthoughtful. The title of the n+1 piece, "The Blog Reflex," highlighted this tendency for Internet writing to be some sort of compulsory reflex rather than deliberative act.

Agger labels this tendency for unreflective thought a consequence of instantaneity (2004). However, as some of the comments in reaction to the piece identified, n+1, a journal that is only produced twice a year, also portrayed some of the traits associated with unreflective thought. Further, some of the on-line comments themselves displayed a deliberative process of thought albeit produced in a short span of time. Moreover, even though the political theory blog Long Sunday was quick to distance itself from the lesser litblogs, it is also a blog produced on the Internet and updated on usually a daily basis. Its chief commentators are academics with presumably full and busy schedules, fitting in blogging with other forms of writing more valued in higher education (i.e., publications in print media). Still, they find time to produce posts for a blog that tries to be reflective. So, as asked before, is speed really the end of the story?

The war between The Elegant Variation and n+1 is a war with two theaters. One of the opponents is located on the Internet while the other's home is the printed page. The question then became where will the war be fought? This war largely took place on the Internet after the initial shot was fired from the printed page. Interestingly, and as several commentators to the battle pointed out, finding a copy of the n+1 piece is difficult. As noted earlier, the journal does not reproduce any of the pieces contained in its print editions on its website. Therefore, to read the piece, one has to go out and buy it or subscribe to the journal. Aside from big cities and college towns, most local bookstores may not carry it. Several people, including Sarvas, requested that the journal put "The Blog Reflex" on its website as it seemed only fair to make a piece criticizing on-line media accessible to the subjects of its critique.[8] Again, the war largely took place on the Internet. Two of the n+1 editors participated in the blogs by posting several comments of varying length and seriousness. Was this participation self-defeating as they allowed the battle to be played out on "enemy ground?" Is the ability of the Internet to provide a forum for such arguments a positive or negative addition to public discourse?

If such a battle had taken place within the pages of a print journal, in all likelihood, the journal would have lost some, if not all, of its credibility. At the risk of seeming stodgy and conservative, even the more radical journals attempt to cultivate an aura of authority and expertise. In many ways, print media appears inherently more authoritative than blogs. The quotation located at the opening of this paper suggests that the editors of n+1 chose the form of print media over the blog because print media better lends itself to seriousness of thought. But there are two ways that this seriousness can perform. First, seriousness as a vehicle of thought allows the author to write more contemplatively, presumably better expressing her/himself. Second, seriousness as a indicator of authority prevails upon the audience to respect the author's words as representing truth. Then, to choose a print journal, still considered (although subject to future change) as inherently more authoritative and even authentic, is to ease the burden of convincing the audience of your position.

On-line bloggers must struggle much more to convince their audiences of their positions, if such a struggle is even important to them. However, since blogging can be taken up by anyone with access to a computer and the Internet and rudimentary computer skills, more people can attempt to contribute serious thought. Literary criticism is no longer confined to a group of elites that have acquired a certain set of institutional markers that brand them as "official critics." Others may have valuable opinions to share. But what is the nature of the added value?

The form of the Internet as currently constructed and utilized creates a huge ocean of writers. The impossibility of reading even one percent of the information contained on the World Wide Web should be apparent to anyone. Still, writers continue to contribute texts to this galaxy of words. Agger argues that the rate of textuality is in an inverse relationship to the rate of discourse (Agger 1990). With everyone talking or writing, no meaningful

conversation can be held. For those arguing that the Internet's form allows for a more democratic public sphere, then some meaningful discourse must be occurring on-line. However, merely giving anyone and everyone the opportunity to speak/write cannot be held to be a democratic improvement. "The antidote to a silenced public sphere is not a cacophonous one in which everyone talks and no one listens" (Agger 1990:93).

For example, one of n+1's criticisms of blogs in general is that they merely "link" to other sites and texts rather than produce any original work. The linking creates a form that is more focused on events rather than topics, a critique similarly made of television news media (Altheide 1987). Rather than create a sustained emphasis on any one topic, the litblogs hop from event to event, whether the release of a book, the announcement of a book award, or a juicy book scandal. The hyperlinks allow them to piece together an array of information sound bites that lack a coherence or cohesiveness other than that they all have to do with books. Keeping up on the news in the book world may hold value for some, but the practice of linking detracts from the creation of a meaningful public discourse, or even a public itself, as discussed more below. Even if a blog does sustain a discussion on a single topic over a period of time, the question then becomes whether the format of the blog easily allows a reader to follow and to contribute to the discussion? The front page of the blog can only hold so many posts, and a reader necessarily has to sift through previous posts and tie together diverse commentary on the chosen topic to see a conversation emerge. If some of the postings contain links, then the reader must also travel across and between sites to follow the conversation's thread.

> It is not texts themselves that create publics, but the concatenation of texts through time. Only when a previously existing discourse can be supposed, and a responding discourse be postulated, can a text address a public. Between the discourse that comes before and the discourse that comes after, one must postulate some kind of link. And the link has a social character; it is not mere consecutiveness in time, but a context of interaction" (Warner 2002:62).

These digitally, rather than socially, linked journeys through time and space are journeys without end as the Internet resembles infinite information. The very purpose of the journey is often forgotten, and the reader becomes enthralled to an information spectacle.

The litbloggers' practice of linking also emphasizes the intertextuality of their form. In literary theory, intertextuality "denotes ways in which works of art – especially of literature – are produced in response not to social reality but to previous works of art and the codes and other conventions governing them" (Sebeok 1985: 657). Intertextuality is not confined to art but is also evident "across writing genres and related to more epistemologically explicit issues" such as global politics (Shapiro 1989:11). Rather than creating a new class of literary work or genre, litbloggers engage in a process of intertextuality that responds to previous aesthetic codes but also political codes that are embedded in our literary political economy. In this sense, rather than producing a new, alternative book culture, litbloggers instead may be solidifying the dominant codes and conventions that are already in place. Litbloggers may, and some do, avoid being accomplices to the reification of dominant discourses by not only providing links but also challenging the source of the links. This is where their power of critique lies and perhaps where they may exercise more freedom than print media whose codes and conventions have concretized since the development of print over fifteen hundred years ago.

Still, while print media may be more complacent with a larger assured audience and may not be able to take the risks that an on-line author can, a greater responsibility to seriousness of thought may produce more reflective thought, and with fewer print publications, many carry large audiences. Even the relatively small audience of the New York Review of Books (280,000) is still much, much larger than the audience of The Elegant Variation, which averages 5,000 to 7,000 hits a day (Getlin 2007). But on-line texts with any measurable audience are still largely reproducing thought that is a mirror image of what can be found in print media while simultaneously deteriorating such thought due to the speed of its production and the quantity produced. The result is the creation of more noise than signal. Lone rangers with smaller cliques or readerships of one may be an exception, but their existence begs the following question.

Whether Practices of Resistance Can be Meaningful Without Consideration of Audience

Both the litblogs and the journal, n+1, attempt to practice forms of resistance, but how is resistance defined or identified? Michael J. Shapiro (1991) provides a useful distinction between a critical theory understanding and a Foucauldian understanding of resistance. According to Shapiro, critical theorists view resistance as a counteraction to

a dominant ideology that can ultimately reveal the falsity of the ideology, while Foucault's genealogy posits resistance as continuing struggles that rework and remake the temporarily fixed structure of intelligibility in an ever evolving discourse (1991).

Following Marx, critical theorists, such as the members of the Frankfurt School, argue that commodity fetishism produces a false consciousness that reads the world as both fixed and rational (Agger 1991). Marx explains commodity fetishism as the substitution of social relations between men by relations between things (n.d.). Things that have entered the marketplace of capitalism have taken on an objective existence of their own. Ties between a commodity's existence and its origins as the labor of an individual are severed. Further, a commodity appears to have a social character only when it is exchanged (Marx n.d.). In attempting to explain why capitalism has yet to fail, the critical theorists turned to culture and ideology that aid capitalism by deepening commodity fetishism (Agger 1991). This deepening through the continued exploitation of worker's surplus value along with the dominance of the culture industry produces a false sense that no real change can occur.

For Horkheimer and Adorno, thought has reified and has become stuck on "repeat." "As a result, the word, which henceforth allowed only to designate something and not to mean it, becomes so fixated on the object that it hardens to a formula" (2002:133). It conforms the world to itself so that nothing appears new. The critical theorists pay close attention to the interventions of the state and culture in securing the seemingly fixed position of capitalism in our society. Their analyses critique dominant institutions and dominant discourses, such as positivism, that have become institutionalized.

Foucault (1997) supplemented the techniques of production, signification or communication, and domination, with the technique of the self. The idea being that individuals govern their own subjectivity through the technologies of the self. This notion opened the door for a greater understanding of power and freedom. What interested Foucault was the notion of techniques of the self as the creation of the self as a piece of art, "the idea of the bios as a material for an aesthetic piece of art," rather than leaving art to the experts (1997:260-261). For Foucault, the subject is not an essence, but the product of subjectification. The self takes on different forms in the different roles it plays.

Foucault emphasized that power was about relations of power, and that relations of power are possible only as long as the subjects involved are free (1997). If the possibility of resistance, in whatever form, is not present in a relationship, then no relation of power exists. As power exists throughout all relationships, institutions, and structures, freedom also exists. In this sense, power is productive. However, domination occurs when power is too one-sided. The problem for Foucault was how to avoid or manage the possibility of domination. "I believe that this is, in fact, the hinge point of ethical concerns and the political struggle for respect of rights, of critical thought against abusive techniques of government and research in ethics that seeks to ground individual freedom" (Foucault 1997:299).

He also believed that his concept of governmentality revealed the possibility of the freedom of the subject and its relationship to others (Foucault 1997). In a sense, the possibility of freedom is simply understanding the world in different terms, rather than participating in violent revolution. Foucault's aim was to reveal how we came to have a certain understanding of the world and impress upon us that our understanding was contingent, that it depended upon exclusions of alternative conceptions of reality. Crampton takes up the Foucauldian notion of resistance as a practice or technique of the self. He defines practices of resistance, like blogging that he terms "self-writing," as "a form of resistance to normalization because they are where one works on oneself in a process of becoming," emphasizing not the content of the blog but the process (Crampton 2003:104). To oversimplify, critical theorists view resistance as a collective struggle, while Foucault's technologies of the self can be practiced successfully by the individual.[9]

n+1 takes seriously its mission to be a dissenting voice, hoping to follow in the footsteps of former journal, The Partisan Review, and in the work of the Frankfurt School. Similarly, the litblogs claim to be fighting against a literary scene dominated by big box bookstores, mega on-line stores like Amazon, and a narrowing of the literary review world, as witnessed by the shrinking number and size of book review insert sections in newspapers. Perhaps the two view resistance differently – n+1 follows the tradition of the Frankfurt School that defines resistance as opposing a dominant ideology that can be revealed as false, while the litbloggers practice the Foucauldian techniques of the self, their writing acting as a process of continual revision. However, as argued above, the litbloggers' practice of intertextuality may solidify or reify what is already in place rather than transform. Perhaps to assign this difference of understanding to the journal and the litbloggers is only to make use of a helpful heuristic that provides space for a functional analysis but at the same time may also homogenize or distort. Still, since the journal and the litbloggers

seem to have assigned these positions to themselves within their own discourses, it may be helpful to carry this argument forward.

If both sides of the war are practicing resistance, albeit within different constructions but with perhaps a similar goal, then the question becomes whether this is a civil war? Is the same side fighting itself? And if so, what are the reasons and what are the consequences? In a sense, this war is a fight over audience. The acquisition of an audience by an author may be seen as a validation of what is written. As Sarvas in his promised last post on the subject thoughtfully asks, "Doesn't the literary ecosystem allow for both what n+1 offers and what The Elegant Variation offers?" (Sarvas 2007b). Is the audience for anti-establishment practices of resistance and critical thought so small that the players must fight each other for relevancy? n+1 seems to be criticizing the litblogs for not taking their practices of resistance seriously enough. In reply, the litblogs challenge whether a journal with a relatively small audience, an elite educated authorship, and a largely inaccessible style can practice resistance any better.

But to follow the argument presented above, that the journal and the litbloggers view resistance differently, the better question seems to be whether both practices of resistance fit a definition of the political that seeks to change the world? This question recurs to the well-established argument between aesthetics and politics and whether one or the other holds some position of preference in its capability of altering the world for the better. Can art that is produced by an individual without an outward, visible affiliation to any collective or collective understanding be a political act? Must Bob Dylan stand for something? – admittedly a somewhat facetious question. The same question should be asked of Foucault's individual who practices technologies of the self ? Crampton argues that blogging as a practice of resistance is necessarily an individual form of resistance, as it involves working on oneself. "The point of the blog is not the content: it is the form, or process itself: self-writing" (Crampton 2003:105). Perhaps the litblogs, even the ones that n+1 criticizes as valueless, have value for their authors as practices of resistance. Nevertheless, many of the more prominent litblogs appear to be read. Does a litblog with value for the author necessarily produce value for the audience?

There may be value to the individual, as noted above, in self-expression or self-writing. There may be value to the public in increasing the size and scope of publications that are produced, distributed and read. But do these added values necessarily translate into an improvement of the political? The nature of litblogs in an abstract sense creates a tension within the book culture between the need for self-expression and the expansion of what literature should reach an audience (an improvement of the individual) and the need for public discussion necessarily centered around a more finite set of texts (an improvement of the relationship between the individual and the collective). Through the lens of critical theory, n+1 condemns existing litblogs to a subsidiary role within the culture industry as failing to further any critical discussion and simply being marketers of books and themselves, neither improving the individual nor the collective.

Brenkman (1979) uses Sartre's concept of seriality to analyze the effect of mass media on the relationship between the individual and the collective.

> **Mass communication addresses the separated subject as constituted by the exchange and consumption of commodities. It produces a relation between the subject and the collective akin to what Sartre calls seriality – the series being a grouping in which the members are connected with one another only insofar as they are isolated from one another (Brenkman 1979:99-100).**

Arguably, litblogs are not a true form of mass media since their audiences are not what we would commonly think of as "mass" (Rich 2007). Still, like mass media, they also appear to create a serial relationship between the individual and the collective. For example, returning to one of n+1's criticisms that litblogs merely "link," one can see how seriality is both produced and consumed on-line. Sarvas claims that "[t]he Web does certain things uniquely well, coupling immediacy with multimedia and a profound sense of interconnectedness, courtesy of the humble hyperlink" (Sarvas 2007g). However, this "sense of interconnectedness" as promoted by the link is a false sense of attachment.

Blogs, whether read by ten or ten thousand, have audiences that are groups but are separate from each other within those groups. They are serially connected to one another through the reading of the blog. They are not an association with the blog as their mouthpiece. The practice of linking further emphasizes this seriality with the bloggers not being content to create and sustain an audience but also needing to spread them around from one blog to the next. The audience is then serially connected to each other and to a blog that is serially connected to other blogs. Contrary to the assertions of many, including Sarvas, the Internet may disconnect as much as it superficially connects. The sense of interconnectedness produced is akin to a human chain of hand-holders. While any link in

the chain may feel a real connection to the individuals on the link's left and right, any perceived connection to a link ten individuals down the chain is illusory. The hand holders connect each other but also spread each other farther out creating more distance between the members of the chain. Graham defines this quality of the Internet as a "paradox" that "by decreasing time-distances between people, it simultaneously annihilates existing perceptions of social space, the situated sense of social coherence – belonging – that arises from social interaction" (2002:164). This increased separation and absence of belonging prevents true association and hinders rather than promotes resistance (Brenkman 1979).

Whether Production Can be Isolated from Consumption

Some herald the arrival of the Internet as a space to create a free economy. Information, the commodity of the Information Society, can be freely traded as seen through "wiki" formats such as Wikipedia and through the use of open source code. Others challenge this assumption and argue that, on the whole, the Internet is simply a further extension of capitalism as it opens up more activities for commodification (Garnham 2001; May 2002). This is, in part, what n+1 criticize the litbloggers of, easily succumbing to the capitalist tendencies of publicity and consumption. Still, many litbloggers would probably take issue with that claim. Many appear to have no direct affiliations with corporate interests and choose books for review on the basis of their own interests, often propelled by the urge to bring lesser known works into the public arena. However, while rushing to be producers of knowledge independent and critical of the mainstream, the litbloggers may overlook how they continue to act as unconscious consumers of capitalist credos.

For example, blogrolls often, if not always, appear on the litblogs' sites.[10] These are rosters of other litblogs that the host either reads, approves of, wants others to know exist, or wants others to know that the host knows them to exist. The term "blogrolling" has now been coined. Its definition being the "self-congratulation and mutual admiration" that occurs frequently between the blogs, as they link to each other and cite each other within posts, making the acceptance of the information presented something like a popularity contest, the source being valued rather than the content (Howard 2003). Traffic algorithms used by search engines exacerbate these effects, putting "popular" litblogs at the top of search results. Again, how is this different from what happens in print culture where writers with a certain cache are listened to more readily than others? Similarly, in academic writing, footnote fetishism has created a standard of valuing the merit of a work based on professional visibility (Luke 1999). If an academic's work is cited by others, preferably by other oft-cited academics in big name journals, as measured by citation indexes, then the work is deemed valuable regardless of its content. An academic's desire for professional success is distorted from the goal of academic contribution to the lust of becoming a known "name" (Luke 1999). Likewise, many litbloggers have distorted their goal of promoting unknown literature, instead promoting their unknown selves, hoping to create a "name." Their practices of linking and bloggrolling highlight how neatly litblogs fit within our current literary political economy, substituting exchange value for use value (Agger 1990).

Further, the aura of independence that the litbloggers seek to cultivate, although likely sincere, can help to mask the increased commodification of writing. A customer walking into a big box bookstore may more easily discern that the books stacked in neat piles on the front tables do not necessarily sit there in such prominence due to any internal worth but rather because their publishers paid extra to position them there. However, on the litblogger's site, the presence of the market may be better hidden. An employee of an independent publisher described the marketing of a book through the Internet as "whispering in someone's ear" (Anderson 2005). And a novelist similarly explained that due to the resistance towards the market by the litbloggers, you have to be more subtle when promoting a book on-line (Anderson 2005). This rearguard action is more difficult to notice and correspondingly, to oppose. Like independent movies and alternative music, the supposed independent book culture may also just be part of consumer capitalism.

What the War Reflects About the Broader Economy of Writing

With the emergence of the Internet and the World Wide Web, the ability to create words in a digital format that could be shared and circulated faster and more easily than the printed page became a reality. That reality has now

been labeled a "virtual reality," seemingly separating it from its origins in the "real" reality. While certain streams of discourse have moved on-line, others have remained firmly bound to the fiber page. Some words produced in "real" reality also appear in virtual reality, mirror images that occupy two worlds. Other words are confined to one world or other, occasionally interacting in conversation between digital and printed page. Notions of spatiality and territory generated in the "real" world transfer their meanings to the digital world giving the impression that the digital world can be thought of and constructed as something other than what exists off-line. This gives the authors of discourse written in the printed world the advantage of a perspective that allows them to evaluate how discourse operates in the electronic system of bits known as the Internet.

The pen and paper discussants hold up the web to their printed words like some sort of mirror and evaluate whether discourse on-line accurately reflects the critical reflections they pour onto fibrous page with ink that has spilled from a plastic cartridge housed inside a plastic printer electronically connected to a computer. When the reflected image appears distorted, the real world's discourse sounds rebuke, dismay and even outrage. Why has electronic discourse produced a false likeness, they may ask. In so doing, they create a contrast or a binary between printed text and digital text and further, establish two seemingly fixed realms. This distinction, perhaps without a difference, distracts attention from the fact that no real change has occurred. However, a recognition that these spaces, like all others, "have a meaning that is mediated by an imaginative geography," may invite contestation and change (Shapiro 1991:10).

Concurrently, some, especially those that read the Internet as a digital public sphere that broadens democracy, may want to see litblogs as a subaltern counterpublic. Fraser defines subaltern counterpublics as "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (Fraser 1992). Litblogs, defined such as subaltern counterpublic, would then seek to expand the confined discourse of the established print media to engage with the oft excluded literary works that fail to fit publishing norms that predetermine what readers want to read. However, this subaltern counterpublic appears to be more of a distorted mirror image of print media's book culture, reproducing much of its structure and rules while merely expanding the amount of text to be digested. Perhaps, the litblogs are just an elegant variation of the establishment print culture?

Warner challenges the "counter" in Fraser's "counterpublics," likening their activity to "the classically Habermasian description of rational-critical publics with the word oppositional inserted" (2002:85). Warner also questions whether Fraser's definition of counterpublics would be limited to the subaltern but would instead also embrace "U.S. Christian fundamentalism, or youth culture, or artistic bohemianism" (2002:86). Warner provides the following revised definition –

> A counterpublic maintains at some level, conscious or not, an awareness of its subordinate status. The cultural horizon against which it marks itself off is not just a general or wide public, but a dominant one. And the conflict extends not just to ideas or policy questions, but to the speech genres and modes of address that constitute the public and to the hierarchy among media. The discourse that constitutes it is not merely a different or alternative idiom, but one that in other contexts would be regarded with hostility or with a sense of indecorousness (2002: 86).

The increasing conflation of print and digital book culture highlights the misnomer of counterpublic to the litbloggers. The litblogs may be expanding book culture by creating an alternative identity of what book culture can be that meets their interests and needs. However, despite this paper's title, any hostility towards them seems only superficial, and any potential change represented by them appears the same. As Warner states, "[c]ounterpublics are spaces of circulation in which it is hoped that the poesis of scene making will be transformative, not replicative merely" (2002:88). Whether it is fair of n+1 and others to put this burden of effecting change on the litblogs is a valid question. More appropriately, perhaps, this analysis demonstrates the shortcomings of arguments that cast the Internet as inherently transformative.

Again, whether the establishment media casts aspersions at the dumbing down of literary criticism on the Internet or whether the Internet enthusiasts adorn the litbloggers with honorary medals for jobs well done, the dominant literary political economy that has substituted exchange value for use value has changed little. Still, to borrow from Fraser, this reports the state of the "actually existing" literary criticism on-line (1992). As Garth Risk Hallberg, one of the blogger contributors to The Millions litblog, commented, perhaps hope remains for a more fruitful discourse.

> I'd like to advance the proposition that we're all engaged in a test-case. To the extent that we can do something productive

> with these questions (which will likely involve listening as well as talking, reading as well as writing), we support the idea that the blog has some place at the table of cultural criticism. To the extent that we spend time finding ever more inventive ways to give one another the finger, we prove out the idea that, behind the hypnotic flickering on our shiny new screens, nothing of much worth is happening (Hallberg 2007b).

The challenge really is to create an elevated, more critical discourse in both media forms and not reduce the analysis of the discourse to easy binaries like technology is evil/tradition is good or speed kills/slowness saves.

Moreover, we should not faddishly embrace the Internet as the next possibility to revitalize an increasingly fragmented Left, when its very nature seems to promote a dispersion of thought into a scattered host of ever smaller communities. Our efforts need to be aimed at investigating the ways in which the Internet can truly connect us, if possible, and then focus our energies there. At the same time, we cannot ignore the print world and relegate it to history. The mediums of our message do matter, but they matter less if our message is not being received. And they matter less still if we no longer know what message we are trying to transmit.

Endnotes

1. "What the blogs have really done is encourage inclusion, encourage people from all walks of life to join the conversation...," as Mark Sarvas, the founder of The Elegant Variation, describes blog democracy (Dotinga 2005).

2. The speed of the Internet cautions me against making any pronouncements of a temporal nature. The majority of the "action" explained below occurred in early 2007. Many on-line and print outlets picked up the story around that time; however, its echoes continue to be heard from time to time in various forms. Still, by the time this text reaches its audience, a more recent dispute may have evolved, The Elegant Variation may no longer exist, and/or n+1 may have published its last issue.

3. By more established, I refer to The Elegant Variation's, I refer to its length of existence, its audience size, and its creator's output. He has, of this date, published several reviews with major print outlets and has a novel (Harry, Revised) forthcoming from a major publisher—the U.S. subsidiary of Harry Potter's, in fact. However, established may not equate with "establishment" yet. The site does seek to create a more democratic space for book culture.

4. In fact, The Chronicle of Higher Education also labeled the "sometimes cranky discussion about the purpose of blogs and the amateurization of literary criticism" a war ("Critical Mass: The Lit-Blog Wars" 2007), as did the Los Angeles Times, "Battle of the Book Reviews: A war of words breaks out between print and Internet writers as newspapers cut back coverage" (Getlin 2007).

5. Or perhaps the proliferating and acidic (eroding) effects of blogs could be likened to the fallout from the information bomb (Armitage and Roberts 2002).

6. In a parenthetical, Sarvas explained the motivation for the more than 6,000 word post , "This post is enormous – apologies in advance – but the n+1 editors have extolled the virtues of length, urging bloggers to compose 5,000 word pieces, so now they've got one. I hope you'll stick through to the end, holding final judgment in abeyance until then. I've tried to avoid anything that smacks of mere defensiveness though I suspect I haven't been entirely successful" (Sarvas 2007b).

7. The Campaign's efforts to save the AJC's book editor, Teresa Weaver, were not successful. She now works as a part-time books editor at Atlanta magazine and an editor/writer for Habitat for Humanity. A post on the NBCC's blog compared the since reduced book section to a racing form (Brown 2007). Additionally, since the start of the campaign, the Chicago Sun-Times' book section has been cut in half.

8. It is only a guess, but due to the piece's unavailability, some of the comments in response may have been made without the authors having read it, surely not a good way to engage in a productive discourse.

9. For an interesting treatment of Foucault's work as a perpetrator of the increasing fragmentation of leftist political thought, see Sanbonmatsu's The Postmodern Prince (2004).

10. For example, The Elegant Variation's blogroll labeled "Barking at the Moon" contains links to some seventy-eight blogs.

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Torture and Absolution: The Shadow Twin Towers of Atro/City

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> Tentacles are always moving, changing direction, twisting, flowing, twitching, frictionless, striated, anti-gravitational, elusive, searching, wanting, feeling, grasping, entrapping. They are magnitudes of intensity, unconscious but alive. . . . [Tentacles] map the terrain of the invisible, anticipating all possible encounters while seeming to be randomly writhing . . . . but even in this state of focus, tentacles cannot help but engage in apparently unnecessary, decadent behavior. This is because they are already anticipating the contingencies of their next encounter . . . . The violence of the encounter does not erase distinction between forms, but grafts impulses or sensibilities of one onto the other. Such a tactile morphology of both sensing (a desire for information) and grasping (an exchange between identities) refigures differences in terms of sublimation. (Wiscombe 1998).

North Tower

The war on terror extends beyond the geopolitical borders of Iraq, Afghanistan, and other nations that support and harbor terrorists. It depends on its own vast network of what the Bush administration variously calls a "coalition of the willing." Of what they are willing to do and to permit is called into question in this section on the North Tower, which interrogates the practices of interrogation upon which the clandestine policy of 'extraordinary rendition' is based. In contradistinction to 'cities of refuge' that harbor refugees from terror, 'cities of rendition' harbor detainees in U.S. custody who have been transported to a 'friendly government' where extrajudicial interrogation techniques fly under the radar of international law and are in reality nothing more than 'torture by proxy.' Such cities are often de-facto cities only insofar as they are temporary places for detention and interrogation (e.g., airplanes, airports, camps). They are, nevertheless, rendered cities rhetorically (in memos and patriot acts) by governments who prefer to question individuals outside the jurisdiction of federal and international courts.

I have on my radar two planes bound for cities of rendition. We all know the torture that happened inside four commercial airliners on 9/11. But not so many of us know what happened inside the Gulfstream V aircraft, N379P. It is probably safe to say that everyone is interested in saving lives. But it is not safe to say that in order to save lives some of us may feel it is sometimes necessary to torture someone. I am tempted to ask my readers to put your hands behind your back and clasp your wrists and hold that position throughout your reading. I do not want to 'see' the hands you use to write, the ones you use to grade student writing, those hands that sign the ledgers of literacy that litter this country. I will not, however, ask that of you. I will simply pretend that your hands are tied. I am also pretending that you are sitting on the edge of your seat. That you are bound up, not spell-bound. I want you a little off-balance. I want us all to understand what it is like to undergo 'enhanced interrogation.' And I want us all a bit worried and unsteady, precariously perched upon an 'extrajudicial edge,' not lounging in our ample academic seats.

My pretend game also includes imagining my readers in some restaurant, or hotel meeting room, a room fortuitously named for the City of Versailles. For the moment, the year is 1793. Louis XVI has been condemned to die, and the Committee of Public Safety is just formed. Versailles was called at that time the 'cradle of liberty,' but today we know this period in its history as the beginning of the Reign of Terror. (Of, interest, perhaps, is the fact that Washington, D.C. was designed by the same French architect who designed the city of Versailles.) And I leave it to your imagination to render the parallels I infer. Now that the interrogation stage is set, we will do a bit of a

revisionist remix and imagine Versailles as a city that in the torture trade is sometimes called a 'black site,' a place of 'extraordinary rendition,' that euphemism for torture by proxy. In what follows, you will read a series of performative questions and coerced answers by some high profile 'ghost detainees.' Unlike enhanced interrogations, however, this focus group may actually yield some valuable information, rather than the kind of information that anyone in enough pain will tell you eventually, that all of us would gladly divulge to save ourselves.

Another French architect, not one by trade, but one that de-structured all structuration, and one whose specter haunts the walls of this imaginary city, will now lead with the first confession in this mock interrogation. Let us imagine that Jacques Derrida, hands also forming a chiasmus behind his back, answered 'without alibi':

> It is necessary to save, it is necessary to assure salvation. . . . [and] this salutary, sanitary, or immunitary concern triggers simultaneously a gesture of war: the militant would like to cure or save by routing, precisely, a resistance. I am not sure that this rescue project, this salvation or health plan, this profession of public safety is not also, in part, or even in secret, that of your States General, which is already pregnant, virtually, in the dark, with some shadow Committee of Public Safety. As a result, I am not sure, at this point, that I am altogether one of you even if, in part, I remain proud to claim to be by sharing your worry. (Derrida 2002: 243)

What concerns Derrida is the relation between cruelty and sovereignty. The revolution in principle (concerning princes) begat a "cruel Terror" (Derrida 2002:260). As Derrida formulates the question and then answers it: Was the convocation of the States General, convoked by a king, the first gesture of cruelty, or a vain attempt to prevent it (Derrida 2002: 260)?

> We will never know. By definition, we will never know whether the States General, at the moment of their first convocation, were destined to condemn or save the king's head, and it matters little, no doubt, because in any case the two gestures, condemning and saving, remain indissociable. They inscribe in the concepts of sovereignty and cruelty an ambiguity that is as unrelievable as autoimmunity itself. It is too late, even for the question. (Derrida 2002: 260).

Right. Mortal questions are always too late. According to Thomas Nagel, "[n]o elaborate moral theory is required to account for what is wrong in cases like the Mylai massacre, since it did not serve, and was not intended to serve, any strategic purpose . . . . I propose to discuss the most general moral problem raised by the conduct of warfare: the problem of means and ends" (Nagel [1971] 1979:53-54). Atrocities committed in the name of warfare also spotlight cities of extraordinary rendition, the atrocious having roots in the Greek for 'black eye.' Certainly the United States suffers a perpetual black eye since the Mylai massacre, and it grows blacker by the minute given the events at Abu Ghraib, and God knows where and what else (and He does). In short, enhanced interrogration and/as extraordinary rendition reinvents the city as atrocity—atrocities that figure as atro-tropaic events—black tropes writing black sites. A memo, full of black tropes, can function as architecturally as blueprints for a municipality. It can provide legal and extra/ordinary powers (sometimes called eminent domain), and we should not neglect the less than benign relation between ordinary and ordnance, nor between municipality and munitions. Cities of rendition give the space of such encounters, and writing gives the order. John Yoo, legal architect of the Bush administration defense of the use of enhanced interrogation techniques, wrote such a memo one week before the U.S. invasion of Iraq in March 2003. According to a CNN report:

> The memo also includes past legal defenses of interrogations that Yoo wrote are not considered torture, such as sleep depravation, hooding detainees and 'frog crouching,' which forces prisoners to crouch while standing on the tips of their toes. 'This standard permits some physical contact,' the memo said. 'Employing a shove or slap as part of an interrogation would not run afoul of this standard.' (CNN 2008)

Here we can see the 'tactile morphology of tentacles' already "anticipating the contingencies of their next encounter" (Wiscombe 1998: 25%). It seems the standards for treatment of prisoners of war, established by obscure bodies such as the Geneva Convention, are full of restrictions that now require rhetorical rerouting. As Eyal Weizman explains, "Since military planners are acutely aware that the methods required for urban warfare will make soldiers potentially liable to prosecution for war crimes, American and Israeli governments cancelled their membership in the ICC [International Criminal Court]" (Weizman 2003:180). In addition, the Bush administration has aggressively sought to weaken the Court's effectiveness by "negotiating bilateral agreements with other countries, insuring immunity of U.S. nationals from prosecution by the Court. As leverage, Washington threatened termination of economic aid, withdrawal of military assistance, and other painful measures" (Global Policy Forum 2008).

There are, however, powerful correctives at work to offset such political end runs. Weizman points to the

existence of international courts, the development of cheap recording equipment, and the availability of satellite communication that greatly limit military operational methods (2003). The Army of One, however, highlights a radical singularity that is proving to be a motto forged from a two-edged sword. The military term " 'strategic corporal' characterizes the huge ramifications of the actions of the individual soldier" (Weizman 2003:180). One soldier, a graduate student in Clemson University's M.A. in Professional Communication program, recently told me why a $200 light kit would achieve the same effect as more 'enhanced interrogation' techniques. I asked how that is possible? He said, "Those lights are hot, and you can't see your interrogator. It's like having God asking you questions, and God wouldn't ask you trivial questions, right?" (Callot 2008). I asked him whether he had ever participated in questionable interrogations, and he said on a few occasions it was critical enough to use enhanced interrogation techniques, but instead they used a "modified civil affairs operation" (Callot 2008). At the end of my interview with him, I thanked him for sharing his experiences and opinions with me, and his parting comment was: "Listen, I'm just one soldier. There are about a million of us" (Callot 2008).

And, as we all know, other operatives serving our country also conduct enhanced interrogations. Thus, we should observe a snippet of the recent Senate Select Intelligence Committee interrogation of CIA Director (and Air Force General) Michael Hayden on the question of enhanced interrogation techniques.

> [Senator] FEINSTEIN: I'd like to ask this question: Who carries out these [enhanced interrogation] techniques? Are they government employees or contractors?
>
> HAYDEN: At our facilities during this, we have a mix of both government employees and contractors. Everything is done under, as we've talked before, ma'am, under my authority and the authority of the agency. But the people at the locations are frequently a mix of both—we call them blue badgers and green badgers . . . . This is not where we would turn to Firm X, Y or Z, and say, this is what we would like you to accomplish. Go achieve that for us and come back when you're done. That is not what this is. This is a governmental activity under governmental direction and control, in which the participants may be both government employees and contractors, but it's not outsourced.
>
> [Senator] FEINSTEIN: I understand that.
>
> HAYDEN: OK. Good. (Schachtman 2008)

As sometimes occurs during interrogations, the detainee reverses the roles and tries to wrest control of the process in order to have the last word. So, we sometimes see a good cop/bad cop interrogation method rhetorically defused in two words. "OK. Good." It's a political nightmare from which we desperately need to awaken. Simon Critchley, has a question for us: "My question is very simple, but the answer is far from self-evident: how do we begin to grasp the political situation in which we find ourselves? . . . . [more precisely, he asks] how did Bush get reelected in the American Presidential elections in November 2004? How did Bush win? Well, I think part of the story is that certain people in the Bush administration have got a clear, robust and powerful understanding of the nature of the political. They have read their Machiavelli, their Hobbes, their Leo Strauss and misread their Nietzsche" (Critchley 2007:133). "Politics is not the naked operation of power or an ethics-free agonism, it is an ethical practice that is driven by a response to situated injustices and wrong" (Critchley 2007:132). The problem is that injustices are sometimes situated outside the jurisdiction of victimary logic, and in fact exploit such logic to foster fear and thereby gain mass solidarity, whole choirs of solidarity singing in unison in the voting booths across this nation. Shades of the anti-civil rights racist election noise are lurking in the shadow of the symbolic, and criminal, twin towers of torture and absolution. "It seems that all the world is turning to noise. We need to turn up the signal, wipe out the noise" (Gabriel 2002).

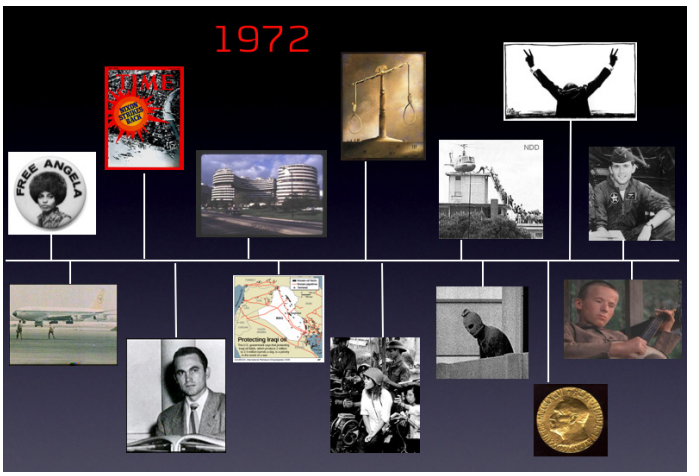
South Tower

In case you haven't noticed, Retro is in style. Quite trendy, in fact. All the rage. So it seems altogether fitting to begin this shift from torture to absolution with a retro-spective moment from the 70s. For those of you who do not remember the 70s (and for some of us that decade is a bit of a blur), or those of you who were born in the post-70s era, let me simply plead guilty to committing what Douglas Coupland calls "legislated nostalgia," "to force a body of people to have memories they do not actually possess" (1991:41). But whether blurred or legislated, it is worth remembering the year 1972. I was enrolled in a community college where racial scuffles and student protests meant I could cut biology class and hone my ping pong skills in the student union, or find a private nook in the library

to read D.H. Lawrence. When Coupland's Generation X-ers visit the Vietnam memorial, they capture this kind of "historical slumming" like this:

> Andy, I don't get it. I mean, this is a cool enough place and all, but why should you be interested in Vietnam. It was over before you'd even reached puberty." "I'm hardly an expert on the subject, Tyler, but I do remember a bit of it. Faint stuff: black-and-white TV stuff. Growing up, Vietnam was a background color in life, like red or blue or gold—it tinted everything. And then suddenly one day it just disappeared. Imagine that one morning you woke up and suddenly the color green had vanished, I come here to see a color I can't see anywhere else any more. (1991: 151)

So, picture the color green, and imagine the soundtrack of life in 1972 during this rundown of just some of the events of that year (Wikipedia).



Visual Timeline of events in 1972 created by Cynthia Haynes

Angela Davis is released from jail. A Lufthansa plane is hijacked. President Nixon orders the mining of Haiphong Harbor in Vietnam. Governor George Wallace is shot. Watergate. Iraq nationalizes the Iraq Petroleum Company. The Supreme Court rules that the death penalty is unconstitutional. Jane Fonda tours North Vietnam. The last U.S. ground troops are withdrawn from Vietnam. The Munich Massacre of 11 Israeli athletes at the Summer Olympics shocks the world. In the Presidential election, Republican incumbent Richard Nixon defeats George McGovern in a landslide. There was no Nobel Peace Prize awarded in 1972. In 1972 George W. Bush refused to take the Air force physical exam, some claim because of their newly announced drug testing program. And, in 1972 the film Deliverance was released.

The rhetorical canon of delivery bears two connections here. First, the Greek term for delivery was 'hypokrisis,' which means 'acting.' Second, among its numerous definitions, delivery also means absolution. In 1637 Ben Jonson wrote: "Some language is high and great . . . the composition full, the absolution plenteous, and poured out, all grave, sinewy, and strong" (qtd in OED; Discoveries Wks. 1846, 759). Although this is one of the more obscure meanings of absolution, I am asking delivery to function here as a rhetorical threshold, or what Brenda Laurel would term a "thresholdy phenomenon" (1991: 21). I want it to work out of obscurity, that which is shrouded or hidden in darkness, because not only does rhetoric sanction the notion of the hidden hermeneutic, it has wired (and worn) this switchplate as perhaps its only badge of responsibility. Heraclitus imagined the logos as lightning, the word as teleporting in and out of obscurity. Plato, as we know, deplored rhetoric's stormy personality, demanding that philosophy must tame this tempest and divest it of its mysterious powers. Of course, the irony is that philosophy plots its own storm paths using the same rhetorical radar, and then claims it has harnessed its energy for the "good," and constructs a political powerplant called democracy on the shores of the enlightenment ideals of reason, responsibility, and human rights. Yet democracy has suffered countless blackouts over the years. It has yet to figure out that is it not immune to power outages. It deplores the rhetorical rogue at the same time it sanctions the obscurity of the rogue, its ability to fly under the radar of the laws of nature and culture. This is how the 'hypokrisis' became the hypocrite—how delivery became deliverance, and how absolution wrote the book on auto-immunity.

Maybe this brand of rhetoric is more like White lightning. On August 16, 2006, President George W. Bush became the first president to pardon a cast member of the 1972 Academy Award-nominated movie "Deliverance" (DOJ). Randall Deal, an obscure actor who played a bit part in the film, was convicted in the early 60s for violating liquor laws, more commonly known as 'moonshining.' Among the 157 individuals pardoned by Bush to date, five have been convicted of crimes related to moonshining.'

As with all presidencies, Bush has pardoned his share of convicted criminals, or commuted their sentence (the annual Thanksgiving Turkey and Scooter Libbey come to mind), but the Bush absolution of Randall Deal is tame compared to the absolution deal cut in 2006 between Congress and the Executive and Judicial arms of our government. It goes by the name of The Military Commissions Act of 2006. Elizabeth Holtzman explains:

> Thirty-two years ago, President Gerald Ford created a political firestorm by pardoning former President Richard Nixon of all crimes he may have committed in Watergate -- and lost his election as a result. Now, President Bush, to avoid a similar public outcry, is quietly trying to pardon himself of any crimes connected with the torture and mistreatment of U.S. detainees. The "pardon" is buried in Bush's proposed legislation to create a new kind of military tribunal for cases involving top al-Qaida operatives. The "pardon" provision has nothing to do with the tribunals. Instead, it guts the War Crimes Act of 1996, a federal law that makes it a crime, in some cases punishable by death, to mistreat detainees in violation of the Geneva Conventions and makes the new, weaker terms of the War Crimes Act retroactive to 9/11. Press accounts of the provision have described it as providing immunity for CIA interrogators. But its terms cover the president and other top officials because the act applies to any U.S. national. (2006)

In short, retro-activity is also in. While it is equally important to scrutinize the rhetorical stripping of habeas corpus rights of detainees, the definitions of enhanced interrogation this act spells out, the permission of secret trials, and the absence of the right to a speedy trial, I want to switch off the auto-focus and zoom in on this retroactive immunity. And from my admittedly feminist perspective, I can tell you it has the muscular tone of absolution on steroids.

The problem is not a new problem, but we can date its most recent iteration to the hijackings of 9/11, which (it turns out) became a compound hijacking—and though it may be considered irreverent or unpatriotic to say this, much more was hijacked that day than four airplanes. Within hours of the horrendous events of 9/11, the twin engines of rhetoric and democracy were hijacked as well, and we have witnessed the violent unfolding of this hijacking over the past seven years. The War on Terror is on auto-pilot. It has built in auto-assessment, auto-system-checks (as opposed to a checks and balance system), and auto-absolution. It is absolutely auto-immune.

The question of responsibility is, unfortunately, a question that rhetoric is hardly in a position to answer. And even though the question is being asked more loudly, more frequently, and by more and more people, the fact remains that this seven-year war machine and political juggernaut has the whole world on the verge of a power outage of epic proportions. Because the economic and social disasters that it has caused cannot be undone with rhetoric, this is the first time I sense the powerlessness of rhetoric to effect such a mass change. This is the first time that rhetoric seems, to me, doomed. I feel like storming the cockpit, but the doors have been reinforced with fear and retributionist policies. How do we disengage this auto-pilot? Whose responsibility is it? Where is response ability?

Democracy is missing. It is no longer the most effective means of delivering freedom, protecting its citizens, or bringing about justice. It has probably succumbed to the Stockholm syndrome, that is, it has become emotionally attached to its abductors. Pathos has turned to mass pathology. The people elected this president not once, but twice. While there are bills in both the House and Senate designed to restore the ability to prosecute government officials, including those in the White House, for war crimes, both bills are stalled in subcommittees, and have been for over a year—locked in the church coffers of special interests, compassionate conservativism, and faith-based politics.

If not democracy, then what is its Other? Derrida has exposed the inextricable link between democracy and Greco-Christian theology insofar as he reminds us that "where the democratic realm becomes coextensive with the political, where the democratic realm becomes constitutive of the political realm precisely because of the indetermination and the 'freedom,' the 'free play,' of its concept, and where the democratic, [has] become consubstantially political in this Greco-Christian and globalatinizing tradition . . . the only and very few regimes . [unless I am mistaken]. . that do not present themselves as democratic are those with a theocractic Muslim government" (2005: 28). Without fear of retribution, Derrida nevertheless speaks up for "the right to speak without taking sides for democracy" (2005:41). As he rightly observes, waging a war against the "axis of evil," those "assassins of democracy," inevitably results in restrictions on our own freedoms and rights, and abuses of potential enemies all of which insures that democracy "must thus come to resemble these enemies, to corrupt itself and threaten itself in order to protect itself against their threats" (2005: 40). For Derrida, "[w]herever freedom is no longer determined as power, mastery, or force, or

even as a faculty, as a possibility of the 'I can' . . , the evocation and evaluation of democracy as the power of the demos begins to tremble" (2005:40-41). He asks, "Is democracy that which assures the right to think and thus to act without it or against it? Yes or no?" (2005:41; emphasis mine).

Although I am suggesting that rhetoric has been hijacked, and that may infer that we are responsible to (perpetually) plan and carry out its rescue, this would not be a rhetorical move. Have we forgotten the failed attempts to rehabilitate it? Have we forgotten our addiction to self-empowerment? Have we forsaken Nietzsche's warning against ressentiment and reactionary behavior? Have we forgotten his lesson that "slave morality always first needs a hostile external" ([1887] 1969:37). Have we foolishly underestimated the genius in his anti-imperative testimony: "The last thing I should promise would be to 'improve' mankind" ([1888] 1969:217)? Is our anti-Nietzschean will-to-rehab the ultimate will-to-power? Are these the lessons unlearned from the textbook of our most pressing danger? That train left the station with Heidegger, who reminded us that:

> What has long . . . been threatening man with death, and indeed with the death of his own nature, is the unconditional character of mere willing in the sense of purposeful self-assertion in everything. What threatens man in his very nature is the willed view that man, by the peaceful release, transformation, storage, and channeling of the energies of physical nature, could render the human condition, man's being, tolerable for everybody and happy in all respects. But the peace of this peacefulness is merely the undisturbed continuing relentlessness of the fury of self-assertion which is resolutely self-reliant. What threatens man in his very nature is the view that this imposition of production can be ventured without any danger, as long as other interests besides—such as, perhaps, the interests of a faith—retain their currency. ([1946] 1977:117)

This passage contains a doubly hyphenated problematic in the same word: self-assertion and self-assertion. My narrative thus far is a cautionary tale of responsibility run amok amid the rhetorical sanction, or absolution, of its tragic consequences. It is perhaps utterly forgettable. In a Nietzschean sense, I hope it is. I hope we can forget the 'for' in whose name responsibility and democracy are most frequently invoked in order to take up Nietzsche's goal for mankind, which is primordially (in its itself-ness) Being's goal, to produce a being who can take absolute responsibility for himself. This is not to say it is 'against' those for whom we are responsible. As Derrida says, "[l]et us say yes to who or what turns up, before any determination, before any anticipation, before any identification, whether or not it has to do with a foreigner, an immigrant, an invited guest, or an expected visitor" (2000:77). But it merits our acknowledgement that the complicity of rhetoric in the compliance-gaining strategies of rogue responsibility is retroactively marked—it is being held hostage by the worst of both faith and reason. Doing something would, then, amount to actions that could not help but be a monstrous reflection of these twin extremisms. Such doing, in theological terms, is called auto-absolution. In political terms, it is called manifest destiny. In Kant's theory of justice, it is called retributivism.

Speaking "in the double wake of Nietzsche and Freud," (2002:271) Derrida relentlessly reminds us " of the indissociable tie between cruelty and state sovereignty, state violence, the state that, far from combating violence, monopolizes it" (2002: 268). Now, in addition to the spread of democracy, freedom, and free enterprise—by all accounts taking responsibility for the liberty and prosperity of all people—we take it upon ourselves to export and outsource retribution. Unfortunately, such taking has taken thousands of lives, yet the policy-makers of democratic ideals do not implement or articulate these policies without rhetorically fail-safe absolution imbedded in each 'mission accomplished' or each 'sacrifices will be made' passive prediction. There is, in other words, what Derrida calls an "autoimmune necessity inscribed right onto democracy" (2005:36). The task of rhetoric is to reveal its own autoimmunity and turn it back on itself ir/responsibly. Much as Derrida reformulated the 'autoimmune law' "around the community as auto-co-immunity" (2005:35), rhetoric's responsibility is 'to take absolute responsibility for itself' rather than to absolve itself 'for' the world. If Heidegger was right to say "Language is the House of Being" ([1946] 1977: 193), then rhetoric is not wrong to say to 'Mind your own house.'

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Massive Multi-player Online Games and the Developing Political Economy of Cyberspace

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This article explores economics, production and wealth in massive multi-player online games. It examines how the unique text of each of these virtual worlds is the product of collaboration between the designers of the worlds and the players who participate in them. It then turns its focus to how this collaborative construction creates tension when the ownership of virtual property is contested, as these seemingly contained virtual economies interface with the global economy.

While these debates occur at the core of this virtual economy, at the periphery cheap labor from less-developed economies in the analogue world are being employed to 'play' these games in order to 'mine' virtual goods for resale to players from more wealthy countries. The efforts of the owners of these games, to curtail this extra-world trading, may have inadvertently driven the further development of this industry towards larger organizations rather than small traders, further cementing this new division of labor.

Background

In the late 1980s, multi-user dungeons (MUDs) such as LambdaMOO were text-based environments. These computer-mediated online spaces drew considerable academic interest.[1] The more recent online interactive worlds are considerably more complex, thanks to advances in computing power and bandwidth. Encompassing larger and more detailed worlds, they also enclose a much larger population of players. The first game in the new category of Massively Multi-player Online Role-playing Games (known initially by the acronym MMORPG and more recently as MMOG) was Ultima Online http://www.uo.com, which was launched over a decade ago in September 1997. While tracing their origins to the more humble MUD, MMOGs are very different environments. There are currently more than 200 different MMOG game worlds. EverQuest http://everquest.station.sony.com/ was the early industry leader and is operated by Sony Online. At its peak EverQuest had nearly half a million players, although it now makes up just over one percent of the total market with less than 200,000 players (Woodcock 2008a). Currently, the most popular game in the genre, World of Warcraft http://www.worldofwarcraft.com/, is operated by Blizzard Entertainment. In January 2008 this game passed a record 10 million active subscriptions (Blizzard 2008) and occupied more than 60 percent of the market (Woodcock 2008a).[2]

A distinct virtual world is rendered in each game, with different themes, activities and objectives for players. Normally players will purchase the game software, and then pay a monthly access fee. Within the game world players are projected as their avatars – digital representations of the characters they play – and gain virtual skills, equipment, and wealth. The value of this market is expected to reach US $4.4 billion by 2010 (Burns 2006).[3] The games are of sufficient size and dimension that they have attracted the attention of security agencies concerned with terrorist training and communications (O'Harrow 2008). Software glitches have been used to aid the study of the spread of

disease epidemics in the real world (Lofgren and Fefferman 2007).

While World of Warcraft is the current dominant game, there are a wide variety of genres and types of virtual worlds. Fantasy-type role playing games make up some 94 percent of all games followed by science-fiction-styled games at four percent (Woodcock 2008b). While many are competitive and story-driven there are others, such as Second Life http://secondlife.com/, that create less-guided virtual worlds. The number of people taking part in these games recently reached 16 million and is accelerating (Woodcock 2008c).

Virtual Wealth

This type of environment is significantly different from other spaces in the broader digital environment accessed through the Internet. Each game world is limited – it has a scarcity of resources and abilities. A player's avatar, and the virtual goods they create and own, share a constancy of production that mirrors off-screen goods. This contrasts with other 'normal' digital artefacts on the Internet which can be easily copied and distributed at minimal cost. While it might be possible to make a digital copy of a character's magic armor and sword from World of Warcraft, it would not be possible to do so in the context of the game – where the item's value is activated – without going through a similar process of production, whether it be fighting a virtual dragon, or time spent behind the bellows in the virtual smithy. Throughout history, the ideal of the best possible world has been one of abundance and ease, yet it is the constraints and limitations of the MMOG worlds that provide the challenge and appeal to players. As Edward Castronova (2001), Associate Professor of Telecommunications at Indiana University noted, 'people seem to prefer a world of constraints to a world without them'. Juul (2005) observes that these limitations present affordance as well as limitations, as quite simple rules can be used to create complex outcomes.[4]

This leads to a situation, in some games, where simple commodities that might otherwise have little value to players, take on a much higher economic significance, as time and effort must be spent to produce them. Similarly, in many worlds, characters or avatars that develop virtual skills and abilities over time become more valuable, by virtue of those attributes, than avatars that have only just been created. It takes time and effort to 'grow' them. This involves not just an expenditure of off-screen capital to pay for game subscriptions and Internet access, but an investment of the player's time, and effectively their labor, within these virtual worlds.

As well as goods, and avatars that require skill and dedication to build, MMOG worlds also contain commodities that are valuable due to their scarcity. There are some virtual items of which there are a limited number, either through the games design, or their production having been discontinued, or in the case of movable error messages in Ultima Online (a highly valuable 'rare' in the game), through programming errors. The most common manifestation of this type of resource, across the various MMOG worlds, is virtual land. Ultima Online, produced by Electronic Arts, had a land crisis as its virtual world Britannia became fully occupied, and prices for virtual land began to spiral. In response, the game's developers added a new continent to the world.

While these electronic fantasy worlds have some similarities to the off-screen economy, actions like this electronic version of continental discovery show that the analogy is far from perfect, although the parallel with European colonial expansion is compelling. The resultant land rush, as this new continent was opened to sale, meant that at one virtual location there were 13 player's avatars. Each player was trying to buy the land by continuously clicking their mouses on the spot while they waited for the 'option to purchase' in the game to be turned on. In the end only one player got to build their tower, when the option was activated (Dibbell 2003b). In this case it was time, effort, enterprise and luck that resulted in virtual wealth. Linden Lab the publishers of Second Life do not charge for a basic player a subscription, but rather make the majority of their revenue through the sale of land in their virtual world (Rappeport 2007).

Value Through Community

Players generate not just their individual character's skills and possessions, they contribute to culture and community within the game. Taylor (2002) notes that this collective construction of the game environment is often overlooked. Humphreys (2005) divides the MMOG production in the virtual environment into 'tangible'

and 'intangible' virtual assets. Tangible assets are those that can be attributed a value in relation to a specific entity. Examples are virtual gold coins, a magic sword, or an avatar's expertise as a carpenter. Intangible assets on the other hand are those that are generated by the communities and social environment that the game activates. Humphreys (2005) notes that these assets are created through both the paid labor of the game developers and the unpaid labor of the players as both combine to create the unique text of the particular virtual world. Tangible assets can potentially be transferred from one player to another, whereas intangible assets are the product of the community and the game and represent a kind of virtual public good.

These worlds are normally designed to be 'stand-alone' environments. As such, they have an internal consistency that rewards player's time and effort. The game-world borders, at first seeming closed, are actually quite porous. These games exist within space enabled through the Internet, access to which is a prerequisite to participation. The borders of these stand-alone environments expand beyond the direct control of world developers as players interact with each other through different applications online. A proportion of the 'intangible wealth', created both by the collective group of players and the world's developers, exists outside the game through discussion forums, at game-related websites and through other online venues. Given this, it is not surprising that activities in these out-of-virtual-world spaces have repercussions within the 'closed' space of the game.

In October 2000 a long time player of EverQuest had the account for his character 'Mystere' suddenly terminated while he was playing. After some investigation, the player found that this action had been taken due to the potentially offensive nature of some 'fan fiction' he had posted to the Elf Lore and EQ Vault online message boards (Burdage 2000). While neither of these sites was affiliated with Sony Online, the company said it had received complaints about the graphic nature of the story, which was a background to his EverQuest character, and took action, it said, in order to protect the reputation of the game (Taylor 2006).

In 2003 Peter Ludlow's Sims Online character 'Urizenus' was a celebrity eviction from that game. He had published his own web site, the Alphaville Herald, named after the main city in that virtual world. His offence was to expose some of the seedier sides to the game including virtual con men and virtual prostitution rings, and the fact that both were, according to the Herald, being carried out by underage players. Electronic Arts stated in a letter explaining their actions 'we feel it is necessary for the good of the game and its community' (Manjoo 2003).

While these reactions by the game owners can be understood in terms of their concerns about the off-screen image of the respective games, the reaction of the players, and the effect on the on-screen communities, illustrates the role of players in creating value through the generation of intangible capital. Players in EverQuest reacted to the eviction of Mystere by closing their own accounts, shutting down their fan sites on the Internet, and writing fan fiction of a more graphic nature than Mystere and then demanding that they too be banned from the game (Burdage 2000). Sony Online responded by having John Smedley, the CEO of the game, write an open letter officially apologizing to the players, and personally calling Mystere's player to invite him back into the game. He declined. Without the community created by the players, and the revenues from their subscriptions, the game's resources have no value. As Sara Grimes observed:

> The collaborative and often symbiotic aspects of these shared production processes are presenting new challenges to legal concepts such as intellectual property and ownership. (2006)

More recently players have begun to protest on-mass within virtual worlds, particularly World of Warcraft. One of the first of these protests occurred in early 2005 when players created a group of avatars, mostly of naked gnomes, who congregated together in large enough numbers to crash the game's Argent Dawn server to protest against changes made to the game's warrior class. A virtual riot ensued including virtual riot police subduing the crowd (Castronova 2005a). These types of protests, within the parameters of the virtual world, are illustrative of the complex construction of the game's text. They are directed at both at the owners of that world and other players.

When Economies Meet

The 'tangible' wealth generated by creating goods and developing character abilities, and stored in real estate also manifests outside the closed games environments as it comes to represent off-screen value, rather than just being redeemable within the MMOG worlds for virtual currency. As Edward Castronova explains, 'The minute you hardwire constraints into a virtual world, an economy emerges, One-trillionth of a second later, that economy starts

interacting with ours' (Dibbell 2003b).

In 2001, using the exchangeable value for virtual goods determined by eBay sales, Castronova estimated the GNP of Norrath – EverQuest's virtual world – was $US135 million, which were it an analogue nation state would have placed it as the world's 77th richest economy (Krotoski 2004), roughly equivalent in terms of GNP per capita with Russia (Castronova 2001).[5] While no data is currently available for similar figures for World of Warcraft the game has a population, and thus potential market, more than twenty times the size of EverQuest in 2001.

Players are able to buy and sell goods, real estate, and avatars outside the confines of a virtual world through the Internet. Many of these sales were originally conducted through eBay http://www.ebay.com – the online auction site – through category 1654 which was reserved for goods from Internet games. In 2003 more than $US 9 million was traded through this service (Ward 2004), although these sales excluded one of the largest of the virtual economies at the time. Sony had successfully lobbied e-Bay to not list goods from EverQuest as of April 2000 (Taylor 2002). In 2007 eBay banned the sale of all goods from MMOGs through its site[6] (Terdiman 2007). More recent estimates for the global trade in virtual goods are between US $250 million and US $800 million (Terdiman 2007).

The value of this tangible virtual wealth is founded on the intangible value created by the players and the developers of the various games. As Raphael Koster lead designer of Ultima Online, stated:

> For every person you see selling an [Ultima Online] account on eBay... there are a bunch of people bidding, too. And they are bidding on intangibles. They are offering up their hard-won real money in exchange for invisible bits and bytes because they see the intangibles of UO as being something worth having. A tower for a sense of pride... I find it odd that people think this cheapens the whole thing. I think it validates it. (Farmer 2004).

Without the combination of the intangible value created by the community of players from Ultima Online, and the world produced by Electronic Arts which makes the game an enjoyable experience, a tower would have no value. It is only able to realize its off-screen value in it's on-screen context.

Within virtual worlds, players are divided in their attitude to this cross-border trade. This debate can be distilled into one of time against money. Players who have spent time in the various games generating virtual wealth resent others who are able to effectively buy their way into a powerful position in the game with off-screen and out-of-game wealth.

The argument follows that this disparity allows inequalities in the off-screen world to permeate the game world, and works against a game's leveling effect, where each new player enters the game with the same basic avatar. The counter to this argument is that this situation unfairly advantages those players who have time to spend in the game at the expense of those who have less capacity to play, but potentially a higher level of disposable income. Vendors of virtual goods refer to this as a need for 'power levelling'. Interestingly, both arguments are premised in a desire for all players in the game environment to be equal. While there is a degree of hostility to 'power levelling' or eBaying as the practice is know, there is much less player disquiet about the practice of 'twinking' where a new player is 'gifted' equipment and other resources from an existing character (Jakobsson & Taylor 2003), perhaps due to the transaction occurring entirely within the borders of the virtual world.

Different games have different attitudes towards extra-world commerce. Some, such as Linden Lab's Second Life, encourage the growth of the world beyond its virtual borders and are happy with free trade across their virtual territory. Philip Rosedal, CEO of Linden Lab explained 'It's great. It's hyper-liquid. When you reduce trade borders you get faster development.' (Terdiman 2004a).

> Others however are more protectionist and actively work to block this type of trade. EverQuest attempts to keep the game within closed borders. The Sony end-user licence agreement (EULA), which the players must agree to at the start of each online session, states: ...You may not buy, sell or auction (or host or facilitate the ability to allow others to buy, sell or auction) any Game characters, items, coin or copyrighted material. (Farmer 2004)

Chris Kramer, Sony Online Director of Public Relations emphasized:

> The official line is that the selling of characters, items or equipment in EverQuest goes against our end user agreement. It's currently not something the company supports and causes us more customer service and game-balancing problems than probably anything else that happens within the game. (Terdiman 2004b)

For the owners of many virtual worlds, the time it takes each character to develop both skills and equipment is central to the game's economic model. Each player must invest time to develop their character (and be rewarded for that time with character improvement), and thus provide revenue from subscriptions. However, as Taylor (2002)

notes, the fact that games provide mechanisms for trading and sales of items within their 'closed' worlds both facilitates the 'cross-border' trading and makes the magnitude of the offense ambiguous.

Who Owns a Virtual World?

In 2002, Dark Age of Camelot http://www.darkageofcamelot.com/, owned by Mythic Entertainment, closed the accounts of Black Snow Interactive (BSI) for selling large numbers of high-level or powerful avatars in their game world and were subsequently taken to court for unfair business practices in a case that remains unresolved (Castronova 2005b). The same BSI was itself unsuccessfully sued by Anarchy Online www.anarchy-online.com for 'grinding' too many accounts (Krotoski 2004). Grinding is an industry phrase for taking basic, entry-level avatars and playing them until they become more powerful, and then selling them to new players. This process engages an economic constancy of production. Each unit produced requires just as much time and resources as the unit before, and the unit after. Many of the other tangible goods in the game share a similar production pattern, the same amount of virtual and off-screen resources are needed to make each virtual product. As Jordan (2005) notes 'within MMPOGs there is only one factor that fundamentally determined production value: time'. Jordan observes that this process starts to intermingle notions of work and leisure when done by players as part of their participation in the game (2005). When this practice is conducted in an organized and professional way it generates a fordist mode of production in an otherwise post-fordist casual economy. For those involved, it crosses the line between these environments marking spaces where the players are engaged in recreational activity, to one where they are involved in virtual labor.

The role of the multiple actors, both players and developers, involved in the creation of the 'text' of each of these games has generated considerable debate about the ownership of this type of virtual public space. Taylor (2004) argues that this is, in part, due to the evolution of the game worlds from the essentially public 'not for profit' spaces of the text based MUDs to the commercialized industry of MMOGs. A number of writers have postulated there may be a need for a new construction of intellectual property and copyright to be developed for these environments. [7] Although, as Castronova (2003) notes, the extensive use of EULAs in the industry currently heavily favors the owners and developers of the games.

There is much debate over who owns the fruits of virtual labor in these virtual worlds. As Grimes (2006) notes 'Nowhere have the tensions between user and corporate interests more clearly manifested than within the realm of online gaming.' Are the players able to do as they wish with the product of their labor, including exporting it through the off-screen world, or is this virtual produce still subject to the copyright of the game's owners, and still their (virtual) possession? Are the goods owned by the company that produces the game, the virtual owners of the means of production, or the players that cause the production within the game, the virtual workers, who thus should own the produce of their virtual labor? Within this context, the debates about how the game is 'played' take on a classic Marxist positioning. Lee Cadwell, Director of Sales at Black Snow Interactive, stated, 'What it comes down to, is, does a MMORPG player have rights to his time, or does Mythic own that player's time?' (Slagle 2002).

The monetary importance of this question is evident by the fact that the trade in virtual goods generate between US $250 million and US $800 million in a year (Terdiman 2007). While it would seem that the law in most cases would support game owners' copyright, and enforcement of the end-user licence agreements by the developers of the games over the players, courts in China have notably come down in favor of the players, ruling that it is they who own the fruits of their labor, perhaps reflecting the state's communist ideology (Russell 2004).

Trading Virtual Goods

Julian Dibbell (2003a) describes the MMOG economy:

> It's a whole new species of economy – perhaps the only really new economy that, when all has boomed and crashed, the Internet has yet given rise to. And how poetic is that? For years, the world's economy has drifted further and further from the solid ground of the tangible: Industry has given way to post-industry, the selling of products has given way to the selling of brands, gold bricks in steel vaults have given way to financial derivatives half a dozen levels of abstraction removed from

> physical reality. This was all supposed to culminate in what's been called the virtual economy – a realm of atomless digital products traded in frictionless digital environments for paperless digital cash. And so it has. But who would have guessed that this culmination would so literally consist of the buying and selling of castles in the air?

The virtual borders of these online worlds are made porous through a number of mechanisms. Originally eBay had provided one of the main marketplaces for trade in virtual goods. This in turn was facilitated by fund transfer and trust enabling services such as PayPal http://www.paypal.com. These services were further aided by the use of email, instant messaging, the World Wide Web and telephones to enable different customers and vendors to meet in the virtual marketplace.

While some trading, both within and outside of the various MMOG environments, is done between individuals, there is also a place in this market for traders or merchants to buy and sell goods and act to facilitate transactions between buyers and sellers. The tower from Ultima Online's Britannia was sold along with the rest of the user's account for US $500 after the player was unable to find work off-screen and needed to realize some of the value of their on-screen assets. The tower and land, along with belongings and characters, was put up for auction on eBay, but before the auction took place, the player was contacted by a MMOG trader, Bob Kiblinger, who broke up the various virtual assets for sale on his web site www.l2treasures.com (Dibbell 2003b).

While these traders were originally individuals, or small teams, the industry has increasingly moved towards larger organizations. One of the first of these was Black Snow Interactive. This was one of the first major players in the virtual goods industry, and provoked the first set of litigation in this area, both initiated by BSI against Mythic Entertainment, and also directed towards the company from Anarchy Online. However by June 2002, the company and its directors had disappeared, without paying their legal bills (amongst many of the company's other suppliers), and the case against Mythic was dropped (Dibbell 2003c).

Internet Gaming Entertainment (IGE) http://www.ige.com, founded in 2001, became one of the largest players in the tertiary virtual-goods industry. With its corporate headquarters in the United States at New York and Miami Beach, it has an office in Hong Kong processing orders for virtual goods (Terdiman 2004b). While IGE sells a wide variety of virtual goods, there are other companies that became more specialized.

Banking Virtual Currency

Gaming Open Markets (GOM) provided a currency exchange between different MMOG worlds, as well as the U.S. dollar. This service rendered the borders of these virtual worlds porous to each other without having to pass through the off-screen world for currency exchange. The company tracked the values of different virtual currencies, which fluctuate according to their supply and demand.[8]

This company's operations illustrated the complexity of trading across the many borders between virtual worlds. To bank money with GOM, a player first had to go to their Web site and open an account. They could then book a deposit, when an avatar of one of the company's agents would arrange a time, and virtual location to meet and transfer the currency. The agent was an avatar of a real person rather than a computer simulation or bot, as GOM did not have access to the computers running the various virtual worlds in which they operated. The player was told via e-mail of a password that the agent would use, so that they knew that the agent is a legitimate employee of Gaming Open Markets and that they are not giving their currency deposit to a fraud. The player then replied with their own password to verify their identity to the agent. This currency, once banked, could then be traded through the company's Web site. If the player wished to buy virtual currency for off-screen cash, then they made a deposit to GOM using PayPal. For GOM, the danger was that the company running the MMOG in question will become displeased with their operation, and locate and delete one of the avatars that hold their virtual cash reserves. However, while the company running each game did, as illustrated above for Mystere and Peter Ludlow, have this sovereignty over life and death of the avatars within its various worlds, they are not omnipresent. Detecting the actual agent could prove problematic. Eventually the difficulties in negotiating the borders of different virtual worlds removed GOM from the marketplace in late 2005 (Combs 2005).

The type of virtual meeting described above with GOM is a standard part of doing business across the borders of MMOG worlds. When the tower and land in Britannia was sold by L2treasures the new owner was delivered the keys by an avatar named Blossom. This turned out to not even be Bob Kiblinger, but his cousin Eugene, who he paid US $10 an hour to make his various deliveries and pickups in the virtual world (Dibbell 2003b). Blossom/Eugene

fulfilled a customer service role within in this industry. While requiring a certain level of literacy in the operation, employing agents such as this allows for the more efficient use of those with the stronger literacy and capital required to value, purchase and sell virtual goods, who then can concentrate on this revenue generation.

While Gaming Open Markets played an important role in developing trade in virtual currencies and withdrew from the market only after allowing their clients to withdraw their deposits other virtual bankers have been less proprietous. Linden Lab banned all banks without an appropriate government registration from trading in Second Life following the collapse on Ginko Financial in 2008, which caused losses equivalent to $US 700 000 in Second Life currency (Miller 2008). A number of similar operations in that world were offering extremely high rates of return in many cases operating as thinly disguised Ponzi schemes (Miller 2008).

While this type of online fraud is not uncommon on the Internet it can become more ambiguous in the context of different virtual worlds. Another famous banking scandal occurred in the science fiction themed Eve Online http://www.eve-online.com in 2006. In this case a player 'Calley' was behind what became known as the EIB scandal when they made off with all the deposits from the Eve Intergalactic Bank of which they were the proprietor. While in different circumstances this might be seen as a criminal act, within the context of the game it was seen as not breaking any of the rules. The game while not necessarily encouraging this type of behavior amongst its players does not specifically outlaw it as players take part in the game world, as it was noted at the time no actual money was stolen. However, the 790 billion Inter Stellar Kredits (ISK) of the game's currency that was involved could fetch as much as US $170 000 dollars in the market for virtual goods (Pollack 2006), making it potentially a very lucrative operation.

The Virtual Economy Meets the Global Economy

There is more activity in the virtual digital economy than this initial overview of the MMOG environment provides. Ken Selden the Chief Economist at Internet Gaming Entertainment noted 'There's a relationship between real-life economics and a virtual economy. I happen to believe that these virtual economies are very real, serious economies' (Terdiman 2004b).

This new digital political economy lays down an added layer of disadvantage on that already present off-screen. The constancy of production of goods in virtual games makes them more analogous to off-screen goods than other digitized goods and services that can be easily copied and transported. It is of little surprise then to find that the production and design of these goods comes to mirror patterns found in the off-screen economy. The production of goods that require relatively complex skills remains at the core, and to this end the companies trading in virtual goods will purchase rare and expensive virtual items from active players based in the various game worlds. Production that requires relatively unskilled labor can be conducted more efficiently through the exploitation of cheap labor in the periphery.

Black Snow Interactive were the first company to act on this understanding that a form of production that requires time, unskilled labor, and can be located anywhere with access to the Internet, would be most efficiently done where hourly wages were low, and then this produce could be sold where money was relatively abundant. [9] While the company was claiming in its lawsuit against Mythic Entertainment that it was defending the interests of players in The Dark Age of Camelot, [10] it had in fact, rather than merely acting as a trader, also set up its own production facility in Tijuana, Mexico.

BSI had set up a facility with a high bandwidth Internet connection and eight computers. It was running three shifts to keep the operation going 24 hours a day, seven days a week, using relatively cheap unskilled Mexican labor to grind characters in the game for resale to American players. This was in the words of Julian Dibbell (2003b) the world's 'first virtual sweatshop', where the virtual and American economies interfaced. In the MMOG world with its constancy of virtual production the on-screen and off-screen periphery and core conflate.

While Black Snow Interactive ceased operation, Internet Gaming Entertainment seems to be following a similar business model. The company needs to send it's avatars into a game where it is trading and travel in the virtual world, this 'travel' however can be based anywhere. The company has thus, already located their distribution operation in Hong Kong, which also runs 24/7. The company has described their suppliers as a group of more than 100 hard-core players who sell the company their excess currency, weapons and other goods (Terdiman 2004b). However, many of these 'hard core players' are subcontractors operating in Mainland China running operations similar to that at Tijuana, although this time on a much more expansive scale (Dibbell 2003a). Large 'farms' initially mostly based in

China, but operating wherever wages are low, house large numbers of computers running 'bots', programs that run the various money making activities in each game and overseen by low wage virtual farmers. These workers in China earn around 56 cents an hour (Lee 2005). In this context China's laws on the ownership of virtual labor in MMOGs, rather than protecting the rights of a virtual proletariat, may instead be a facilitator for this kind of operation.

A study of World of Warcraft by Ducheneaut, Yee, Nickell and Moore in 2006 identified 245 avatars that were online more than 15 hours a day over a two week period (putting them in the top 0.01 percent of avatar activity) in the five servers they monitored, and thus likely to be being played in shifts by more than one player in a professional context. This would extrapolate to approximately 5243 of these high-use gold farming avatars on U.S. servers in that game alone. Interestingly the rogue character class was chosen for these characters by the majority of these farming operations (Ducheneaut et al 2006).

While gold farming generally occurs in violation of different games end-user licence agreements the same principles have also been applied more overtly. In November of 2006 Anshe Chung, of Anshe Chung Studios http://www.anshechung.com in Second Life, issued a press release announcing that she had amassed a real-estate portfolio and other wealth within Second Life that was worth one million U.S. dollars and declared herself the world's first Second Life millionaire (Anshe Chung 2006). Anshe Chung is the Second Life avatar of Guntram and Ailin Graef. Their company develops virtual property in Second Life. Their business model is not dissimilar the gold farming. They take orders for virtual buildings and other virtual artefacts from players and companies based in wealthy developed countries (the couple themselves live in Germany), and then have these products produced by relatively inexpensive labor in China. As with gold farming, Second Life is designed so that players can build things in the virtual world with limited training, allowing staff to be easily employed requiring no specialist skills. This process is facilitated by Second Life policies that allow players to own the copyright on anything they create within the game world and encouraging economic activity across its own borders.

IGE's operations in relation to the MMOG economies stretch from the very core of the digital political economy to its periphery. At the core, the various game's owners and assorted traders in virtual goods fight for control of the legal and moral ownership of virtual property, one that will support their understanding of how the economic system should operate. In this struggle it is of little surprise to see a division of Sony, a member of the Recording Industry Association of America and Motion Picture Association of America, central in the fight for ownership and enforcement of game owner's copyright. As Taylor (2002) notes the company takes the EverQuest slogan 'You're in Our World Now' quite literally. While Sony Online lead the way in shutting down eBay trades in virtual goods, this may have ultimately helped spawn and support organizations like IGE which will have far greater influence, both on the game and in their ability to influence these contests of ownership, than a few individual traders might have. Although the exemption of Second Life from these political manoevrings does not seem to have seriously impinges Amy Chung's lucrative role as an intermediary between virtual production and consumption.

Also close to the core of the virtual political economy are those smaller traders such as L2treasures who are able to exploit their high level of literacy in this area to make a profit. Further from the core, but still a long way from the edges of periphery, are those employed at the intermediate levels of this trade, at the digital semi-periphery – including the IGE employees in the Hong Kong office engaged in processing customer's orders and the delivery avatar for L2treasures. Both are examples of those employed in virtual customer service.

This core and periphery is then laid out on top of existing off-screen economic relations. Cheap labor in Mainland China is exploited and serviced by companies based in Hong Kong. This labor is then in turn exploited as its production is used to service those at the economic core in North America and Western Europe. The efforts of the owners of these virtual worlds to limit trading in their respective virtual goods may have had the effect of further cementing the role of larger intermediary companies such as IGE as other avenues of communications between buyers and sellers such as eBay are closed. Terdiman (2007) quotes Dibbell:

> eBay's move is "a boon for sites like IGE," said Julian Dibbell, author of Play Money: or How I Quit My Day Job and Struck it Rich in Virtual Loot Farming. "They're going to have the field pretty much to themselves."

While maintaining existing global inequalities, there are some aspects of the new virtual sweatshops that are an improvement on the more traditional analogue version. Gold farmers in World of Warcraft are unlikely to have to endure the toxic fumes of the sports shoe factories that preceded them. Similarly Raiter and Warner (2005) note that while staff in these factories are not highly paid they are better renumerated than for equivalent work in agriculture. MMOGs are also rapidly growing in their own right in new markets such as China, where the industry grew 60

percent in 2007 and is expected to exceed revenues of US $3 billion by 2010 (Dring 2008).

Conclusion

The players in the game debate whether it is they – the workers – who own the fruit of their labor, and thus can take the rewards for this labor outside the game, or bring their external resources into virtual worlds, or if it is the companies running the worlds – the owners of the means of production – who own what is produced in those worlds. It is then left to academics to grapple with the question of governance and construction of the value within these privately owned communal spaces. While in the periphery, both digital and off-screen, and beyond their ability to engage from the digital core, there is exploitation of labor in the grinding of the virtual goods at the center of these debates.

In an echo of the mills of Manchester that used to drive the production of cotton in the colonies of the British Empire, so too the virtual sweatshops at the periphery of the virtual economy are driven by production at the core. The intangible capital created by both players and game designers in the production of the complex texts of MMOGs online, provides the foundation for the value of the tangible assets cheaply mass-produced at the analogue periphery. MMOGs do not require a high level of skills and literacy to play. This makes them perfect vehicles for the extraction of value by unskilled, low paid workers who inhabit both the off-screen, and digital periphery. As with other areas of the digital periphery, these workers cannot be seen, indeed are not spoken of, in the debates at the core of the virtual economy.

Endnotes

1. See Dibbell (1998), Kendall (1996), Reid (1996), Turkle (1996), and Kolo and Baur (2004).

2. World of Warcraft has 2 million subscribers in Europe, 2.5 million in North America and 5.5 million in Asia and is currently played in seven different languages (Blizzard 2008).

3. Although other predictions are more bullish with some expecting the market to grow to US$3 billion in China alone in that time period (Dring 2008).

4. Juul uses the game of chess as a compelling example of this phenomenon.

5. For a more detailed analysis of in game income Jordan (2006) provides an analysis and comparison for Castronova's findings that focuses on The Dark Ages of Camelot.

6. The virtual world of Second Life was explicitly exempted from this ban by eBay.

7. See Brudage (2000), Castronova (2003), Farmer, (2004), Grimes (2006), Humphreys (2005) Jakobsson & Taylor (2003), Taylor (2006) and Taylor (2002).

8. MMOG worlds are notorious for periods of hyperinflation when software bugs are discovered that facilitate rapid production of virtual currency.

9. Or at least were the first company to have been exposed in the process of engaging in this process.

10. Of whom there were approximately 250,000 at the time.

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The McDonaldization of Higher Education?: Notes on the UK Experience

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> "But if we probe a little deeper, we discover that despite all these manifestations, man's way of thinking and acting is not progressing as much as one might be led to believe. On the contrary, the principles now underlying the actions of men, at least in a large portion of the world, are certainly more mechanical than in other periods when they were grounded in living consciousness and conviction. Technological progress has helped to make it even easier to cement old illusions more firmly, and to introduce new ones into the minds of men without interference from reason." Max Horkheimer The Social Tasks of Philosophy [1]

The title of these 'notes' is of course an allusion to The U.S. sociologist George Ritzer's thesis of 'The Mcdonaldization of Society' in which he puts forward the theory of an ever more instrumentally rationalized labour process mirrored in an equally instrumentalized sphere of consumer 'choices' essentially already made, so that standardization and 'efficiency' become the unifying functional paradigm for society as a whole. In applying such a theory to higher education, there is intended a deliberate provocation aimed at contributing to critical debates on the substance and purpose of the university, and that over-used but misrepresented concept, 'knowledge'. Ritzer theorizes from what has been described as a neo-Weberian standpoint to analyse the social processes he identifies in four essential aspects as 'McDonaldization': efficiency, calculability, predictability, and increased control through the replacement of human labor with technology.

We can apply these four key concepts to higher education by defining each in this specific context. 'Efficiency' can be seen twofold: as the restructuring of the university toward market-defined goals of 'value' - both in terms of government funding, and to the student 'stakeholder', and of course in terms of the efficient 'production line' of graduates to meet the ever-changing needs of capital, or the 'challenges' of globalization. Such a process of instrumental rationality reduces university education and research to a 'calculable' formula of 'knowledge production' or to use the insipid management-speak term 'knowledge transfer', as if thought were itself merely a quantifiable known-sum to be 'transferred' and managed accordingly. The 'predictability' of the 'McDonaldization' process at work in UK higher education, can be seen in the bureaucratic rationalization of teaching and research to serve straightforwardly economic ends. This can be observed in everything from the squeeze on research funding and subject areas, and the need to attract corporate investment, to the emphasis on 'transferable skills' to be acquired by students by the end of their studies. In critically applying the fourth aspect of Ritzer's thesis to higher education, we can observe this process of instrumental planning and rationalization in the increasing loss of academic autonomy and bureaucratic 'performance assessment', which is of course directly linked to an institution's success in churning out graduates ready and willing for the demands of the so-called 'knowledge economy.'

To restate, however, by employing Ritzer's theory in this specific context it should be made clear that this does not imply unqualified support for his thesis, merely that it can be critically employed in an understanding of the processes at work in UK higher education, and by definition society as a whole.

The 2003 government White Paper by the then Education Secretary Charles Clarke - a man not noted for his belief in the value of thought for its own sake - makes it quite clear that the purpose of UK higher education, indeed all education should be about "harnessing knowledge to wealth creation"[2]; or to translate this Third Way sound bite: universities are - or must at least become - the training centres for cognitive capitalism, in which while an

increasing majority 'participate', the purpose of such 'participation' is merely to achieve a relative upward re-skilling of the workforce to produce a standardised white-collar product ready for 'the world of work'[3], indeed according to this logic, it is the duty of universities to turn out graduates equipped with the desire and willingness to fight their way to the front of the marathon rat race of survival that is late capitalism. To phrase this in perhaps bolder terms: besides those who will be rewarded with a place on one of the select graduate training programmes for a FTSE 100 company, taking their place in the executive-managerial class, there will also remain a sufficiently compliant, but still more importantly 'motivated' pool of 'knowledge' workers, aware of the shortage of worthwhile jobs, and prepared to accept the diminishing returns they face competing for them. Similarly, the ever-expanding number of routine, badly paid 'service' jobs in and outside the 'information' sector which require little but the ability not to quit, will further increase, exerting a downward effect of de-skilling, thus requiring a continual process of re-training, and 'learning' as a matter of survival.

According to this logic, the university must provide a 'service' in which the student 'consumer' can measure the value of their 'investment' in quantifiable terms: from the 'quality' of the education they receive as measured in RAE and QAA scores to the 'real world' financial pay-off they can look forward to in the long term. The value of education in this sense can be seen as a straightforward instrumental means toward the no less instrumentalized end of improving one's chances in the labor market. Universities must accept the need for "reform" - that is, the re-orienting from their original purpose toward training and honing the 'transferable' skills required by the 'knowledge economies' of advanced capitalism.

There is of course the familiar and reactionary counter-argument against the present so-called 'mass-production' of university education, students, and graduates, which sees in any expansion of student numbers or indeed educational institutions, an inevitable 'decline' in the quality of education offered. According to such insipid wisdom, classical 'liberal education' - once embodied in this country solely in the hallowed portals of Oxbridge colleges - can and should only ever be the preserve of a few.[4] This argument serves as a useful straw man for the more 'forward thinking' neoliberal strategy behind New Labour's education policy, which can have the appearance of being 'progressive' merely because it proposes 'change', or 'reform' regardless of what this may actually entail. According to such ideological prescriptions, any opposing argument must be 'conservative' or regressive since it is opposed to this version of 'progress', which by its own definition can be the only one: a classic example of Marx's old camera obscura.

In his inaugural address to Universities UK, CBI Director General Richard Lambert, whilst complaining of the oversupply of graduates, also noted, "Skills and employability should be seen as part of the return on the substantial public investment that is already made in the sector. That's why we all pay taxes."[5] University education and research, therefore, should be about producing 'better skilled' employees and managers ready to meet 'the needs of business.' In the same introduction to the government White Paper, Charles Clarke notes that "reform" of higher education is essential, since "the world is already changing faster than it has ever done before and the pace of change will continue to accelerate."[6] This is strongly reminiscent of Anthony (Lord) Giddens' admittedly pretty threadbare concept of a 'runaway world' which governments cannot hope to control much less steer, and which unless people face up to, they are in danger of being flattened by: a suitably nebulous post-ideological justification for the neoliberal project, which finds its embodiment par excellence in New Labour and the 'Third Way'.

If we accept the wisdom of both government and industry, "change" rather like "reform" is an objective, external process that happens to us, we cannot (and should not) expect to be able to influence it, much less initiate it. Repeating Marx is always useful, so to restate a paraphrased version of the Theses on Feurbach, the purpose of thought - education and research - is not merely to "interpret" the world - as it exists -but to continually set out to challenge it, and to change it. This is not to pretend that the 'classical' university fulfilled this purpose, but to recognize that the limited extent to which it allowed space for critical thought should be developed and expanded. Such a proposal is necessarily at odds with both the 'future' for higher education in the UK proposed by New Labour, and the reactionary desire to 'restore' the reputation of the classical university by restricting and limiting both access, and the nature of study and research to a narrow list of 'traditional' subjects, deemed to be worthy of scholarly inquiry.

In the same introduction Charles Clarke contends,

> "Our national ability to master that process of change and not be ground down by it depends critically upon our universities. Our future success depends upon mobilizing even more effectively the imagination, creativity, skills, and talents of all our people. And it depends on using that knowledge and understanding to build economic strength and social harmony."[7]

Whilst it is easy to snigger at the Blair-heavy inflection of this rallying cry for national endeavor, it offers a useful summing up of New Labour's belief that education and research must serve straightforwardly instrumental ends, proven by their 'usefulness' in one form or another to 'business' (i.e. capital), or to 'informing policy making' (i.e. as functional to the needs of the state). Indeed, according to such spurious reasoning, "wealth creation" and "economic strength", or the subsumption of life to the law of value, the infernal cycle of capital accumulation, profit and loss, is the only worthwhile goal for not just universities but all human activity. 'Knowledge' in the sense of the 'knowledge economy' is not 'knowledge' at all, if we take this to mean the substantive, critical understanding of something, be it a concept, a theory, or a subject; by contrast instrumentalized knowledge defines and limits thought to within the orbit its of its own predetermined ends. Indeed such instrumental logic in higher education can be seen in a recent study by the LSE's Centre for Economic Performance looking at the employment of UK graduates which found 33.8% of those from Oxbridge or pre-1992 'research-intensive' universities overqualified for the jobs they found themselves doing.[8] Instrumentalized reason finds an apt expression in a university research centre devoted to the study of 'economic performance', producing a report on the correlation between higher education, subjects studied, career prospects, and earnings - which also concludes,

> "Choosing courses with low pecuniary returns is potentially rational and can suit the lifestyle choices of many. A problem only arises if young people are led to expect higher pecuniary returns than subsequently will experience."[9]

The decision to study a subject of interest for its own sake, without an eye toward how it might be of benefit to getting ahead in some future 'career' is only "potentially rational" (sic) if it is accepted that the payoff for such a decision will be a lifetime of debt and precarious, poorly paid employment. The same reasoning is behind Richard Lambert's comment in his inaugural Universities UK speech when he cautions:

> "There is a sense, I am afraid, that more means less - that the rapid increase in the number of students graduating from college or university has come at the expense of quality, in terms of knowledge, attitude, and employability. That, surely, is a perception that universities need to be addressing head on."[10]

Such a perspective would seem to favour both a reduction in the number of university places and a further shift towards market-focused imperatives for education and research. However, the similarities between government policy and the position of the CBI's Director-General are greater than might at first appear: New Labour's target of getting 50% of 18-30 year olds into higher education is not aimed at increasing ease of access to studying or research for its own sake, much less in advancing outdated notions such as social equality, instead a distinctive hierarchy of higher education provision is aimed at, encompassing much of the 'vocational' or 'apprenticeship' type courses called for by 'business', and conservative critics alike. Indeed it is fair to say that a majority of the '50% target' are likely to acquire HNCs, HNDs, Foundation degrees, or for that matter Honors degrees in career-focused vocational fields, which are aimed solely at developing skills for a 'career', obtained from a university regarded as being of minimal prestige: it is these very same qualifications and institutions which are expanding to accommodate increased student numbers, and which Lambert cautions are of limited value, despite calling for increased vocational education. The market imperatives imposed on all universities are felt as elsewhere, by those furthest down the food chain: in this case a large number of ex-polytechnics and HE institutes find their existing resources stretched even further with funding dependent on the sole proviso that they increase the number of students they enroll.

To conclude, we might return to the question of the title of these notes, and ask again how we can usefully apply Ritzer's McDonalidization thesis to UK higher education? McDonalidization can be seen as the tendency toward hyper-rationalization of these same processes, in which each and every task is broken down into its most finite part, and over which the individual performing it has little or no control, becoming all but interchangeable. It may be argued that the labor processes involved in advanced technological capitalism increasingly depend on either the handling and processing of information, or provision of services requiring instrumentalized forms of communication and interaction, just as these same 'professional' roles frequently consist of largely mechanized, functional tasks requiring a minimum of individual input or initiative, let alone creative or critical thought, a process illustrated in blackly comic form by the 1999 film Office Space.

However the same absurd logic of capital demands that as such jobs come to proliferate, the worker, or rather 'professional' should identify with such tedium and feel it to be their own, despite the fact they are more than likely on a temporary contract and could be replaced in a matter of hours. The fact that one has more or less identical 'transferable skills' to apply to a 'career profile' of course creates even more intensive competition for a diminishing

number of jobs, which paradoxically, demand more or less the same skills until they are rendered obsolete, by a further process of instrumental rationalization. The model of higher education proposed by the present government, is aimed at serving just such a process in which far from 'creating opportunity', "Education becomes not the symbol of our unfinished development, but of our permanent inadequacy."[11]

Endnotes

1. Horkheimer, Max The Social Tasks of Philosophy (1939) online version: http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/horkheimer/1939/social-function.htm"

2. Clarke, Forward to The Future of Higher Education DFES White Paper (2003) p.2 online version: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/hegateway/uploads/White%20Pape.pdf

3. Given the levels of student debt in the UK - pace the claims of the government and the regional Scottish and Welsh administrations, 'the world of work', specifically its worst paid, most exploitative sectors will be something that few students will be unfamiliar with, either during or after their studies.

4. It is also interesting to note, however, that many of the most well-known proponents of this argument - Alan Smithers, Anthony O'Hear, Roger Scruton - have some past or present association with the (private) University of Buckingham, a less than 'prestigious' institution which specializes in two-year vocationally-oriented subjects, with a particular emphasis on business and management studies.

5. Lambert, Inaugural Universities UK Speech 11.12.2007 online version: http://www.cbi.org.uk/ndbs/press.nsf/0363c1f07c6ca12a8025671c00381cc7/99671dd107d3a624802573ae0051697a?OpenDocument

6. Clarke, ibid

7. Clarke, ibid

8. Figure quoted in the Financial Times 24/25.11.2007

9. ibid

10. Lambert, ibid

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Evil Bert Laden: ViRaL Texts, Community, and Collision

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In 1998, Dino Ignacio's website "Bert is Evil" won a Webby award for best "weird" website. The parody site placed the Sesame Street character Bert in a number of compromising situations by presenting doctored images of Bert at the site of John F. Kennedy's assassination, at KKK rallies, and alongside Hitler. Inspired by Ignacio's website, Dennis Pozniak circulated an image of Bert hovering over the shoulder of Osama bin Laden. Due to a hasty Google search by a company printing posters, this image of Bert alongside bin Laden was included on a protest poster used in Bangladesh. And so, Bangladeshi citizens protesting U.S. bombings in Afghanistan were waving signs that had Bert and bin Laden side-by-side—seemingly in cahoots. A Reuters photograph of the protest poster circulated via news outlets such as CNN and the New York Times, and the poster of Bert and bin Laden was seen by millions of confused Westerners. The image prompted a kind of hermeneutic fit from observers on message boards and various websites. One viewer of the image wondered whether it was terrorist code:"I wonder if it's some form of steganography to send a message to Al Quaida [sic] cells" (Lindqvist 2001). As Westerners looked closer, they saw other clues: "A closer scrutiny of one of the photos reveals a second apparent faux pas on the part of the radical Islamic protesters: Another clip art photo of bin Laden used in the photograph seems to show him with a bottle of Jack Daniels" (McCullagh 2001). This object turned out to be a knife. Such interpretive misfires continued in the days after this image surfaced as Western observers attempted to make sense of the jarring couple of Bert and bin Laden.

Even though the "Bert Laden" image was not on Ignacio's site, the image that Pozniak had circulated was inspired by the "Bert is Evil" site maintained by Ignacio. This prompted Ignacio to take down "Bert is Evil." Upon shutting down his site, Ignacio explained that Evil Bert had become too real: "I am doing this because I feel this has gotten too close to reality and I choose to be responsible enough to stop it right here" (Ignacio 2001). Pozniak had a different take: "You know, it's just a joke. It is a picture of Bert standing next to bin Laden. In no way do I see that it really has anything to do with the World Trade Center. It's just a picture of one guy standing next to another" (Pozniak qtd. in Blackwell 2001). Responses like Pozniak's were in the minority—many were disturbed by the image. Before the picture was traced to Ignacio's "Bert is Evil" site and Pozniak's handy work, many of these disturbed viewers attempted to decode this image. But, upon considering the circulation of this image—from Ignacio to Pozniak to various search engines to a printing company to Bangladeshi protesters to Reuters to Westerners dealing with the trauma of 9/11—we should consider what is behind the interpretive impulse. We might also consider whether interpretation can tell the entire story of ViRaL texts that situate reality chiasmatically between Virtual Reality (VR) and Real Life (RL). ViRaL texts make it extremely difficult to determine the meaning, the intention, or the reality behind a text. My argument here is not that we should give up interpretation when it comes to Web texts or any other kind of text. Interpretation is entirely necessary. And as we will see, many argue that our interpretive practices will have to change as we are forced to deal with ViRaL texts in a globalized, networked world. I see the value in this call for new methods of interpretation, but I am also interested in asking an additional question: What gets pushed to the side or forgotten in the interest of this hermeneutic impulse to decode?

When a ViRaL text is interpreted only in the interest of coherent meaning and intention, we miss an opportunity to re-examine the roots of the interpretive impulse. In addition to seeking out a particular meaning behind this kind of text, we might also recognize the importance of the very possibility that Bert and bin Laden can collide and

collude on the Web. The Web's structure sets up a situation in which Bert and bin Laden can be in-community with one another, regardless of any choice on the part of Easterners or Westerners. These two images both collided and colluded. Regardless of the intentions of protesters or Ignacio, Bert and bin Laden worked together in whipping audiences into a frenzy. What does such a collision/collusion tell us about how community operates on the Web? How can our very understanding of community be expanded in a globalized, networked world? Traditionally, "community" has been understood in terms of collaboration and the conscious efforts of a group to "get together." However, the circulation of the Bert Laden image gives us a paradigmatic example of how such conceptions of community and collaboration can be expanded when we examine what is happening on the Web. Electronic collaboration is not necessarily confined to a concerted effort on the part of a well-defined community. This is certainly happening, but such conscious collaboration is only part of the story. The Bert Laden episode points out how community can also be something that happens to us. In the case of Bert Laden, there are all kinds of strange collaborations happening. Bert is working with bin Laden, Ignacio is working with Bangladeshi protesters, Sesame Street is working with al Qaeda. Such "teams" do not fit our traditional notion of collaboration or community, but they are a result of the structure of the Web—one that invites collisions that become collusions. Such a structure means that the reality of a ViRaL text is particularly shaky. For this reason, the hermeneutic impulse is entirely understandable as we attempt to pin down meaning. But this impulse happens in the face of a ViRaL text that reminds readers and writers that there is no clean separation between "us" and "them."

This essay re-examines the Bert Laden controversy and some of the discussions it triggered in order to pose a new set of questions about interpretation and community. The Web's structure is often credited with providing Web denizens with more opportunities to collaborate. In Here Comes Everybody, Clay Shirky argues that Web technologies tap into a human desire to connect and allow groups to form more easily: "By making it easier for groups to self-assemble and for individuals to contribute to group effort without requiring formal management (and its attendant overhead), these tools have radically altered the old limits on the size sophistication, and scope of unsupervised effort" (2008: 21). However, in addition to providing a space in which we can more easily form groups, the Web also invites a number of collisions. These collisions continually remind us that community, in addition to being the result of something we do, is also something that happens to us. Finding ourselves in-community with various others, we eventually separate off into communities that coalesce around common identities and interests. The Web will continue to allow for (and streamline) this sort of activity; however, it is the collisions that remind us that such conscious collaboration and coalescing happens only in response to our constant predicament of being in-community with a broad range of others. Upon colliding with these others, we immediately begin the process of interpretation: How am I the same as this other? How am I different? Is this other a member of my community? Are they an enemy? Can we make peace? Should we make war? These questions are unavoidable, but they stem from the collisions that we experience every day. Such collisions can be viewed as mere happenstance and as little more than a hiccup on the way to forming communities around common goals and identities. Or, these collisions can be viewed as a way to expand our notion of community so that it accounts for how collisions become collusions.

"A New Hermeneutic"

A number of scholars have examined the "Bert Laden" image controversy in attempts to understand our current cultural moment. These scholars seem to be in agreement that episodes such as this one will happen more and more frequently, and that educators and critics will need to help develop new interpretive methods and literacies. These new methods will have to come to terms with cultural and textual collisions and with ViRaL texts that remind us how difficult it is to contain a text. Upon shutting down the Bert is Evil website, Ignacio expressed concern that his parodies had "gotten too close to reality," and by this he meant that his website had been taken up by mainstream media. For Ignacio, the seemingly harmless combinations of a puppet with various iterations of evil were no longer innocent and contained—they had spread ViRaLly. Henry Jenkins points to Ignacio's concern about things getting too close to reality in order to proclaim a new paradigm: "Welcome to convergence culture, where old and new media collide, where grassroots and corporate media intersect, where the power of the media producer and the power of the media consumer interact in unpredictable ways" (2006:2). For Jenkins, collisions like the one between Ignacio's website and traditional media call for new methods of making sense of texts: "We need to find ways to negotiate the changes taking place. No one group can set the terms. No one group can control access and

participation" (2006:23). Similarly, anthropologist David Pederson discusses responses to the image of Bert and bin Laden as evidence that globalized, networked societies require new "categories and methods": "in the largest of still-unfinished pictures, we continue struggling to find the appropriate categories and methods through which to… make sense of a changing world" (2003: 259). Mark Poster's discussion of Bert Laden joins this call for new methods of interpretation when he argues that the Web is a symptom of larger trends of globalization that impose "a new and heightened level of interaction between cultures" (Poster 2006: 9). For this reason, "the degree of autonomy of each culture is significantly reduced as a consequence of the global information network, and at the same time, the task of constructing a planetary culture is posed" (2006:9). This task of constructing a planetary culture leads Poster to ask whether we need a "new hermeneutic…that underscores the agency of the media" (10). I will return to Poster's discussion of building a planetary culture shortly, but for the moment I want to reiterate that all of these critics see the Bert Laden episode as an indication that the rhetorical environment has changed and that we need new interpretive methods.

These scholars are clearly on to something. As the image of Bert and bin Laden circulated, there was a strong desire to interpret the image and to domesticate the dizzying juxtaposition of Bert and bin Laden. The producers of Sesame Street made an immediate attempt to control their intellectual property:

> Sesame Street has always stood for mutual respect and understanding. We're outraged that our characters would be used in this unfortunate and distasteful manner. This is not humorous...The people responsible for this should be ashamed of themselves. We are exploring all legal options to stop this abuse and any similar abuses in the future. (2001a)

Additionally, in the days after the publication of the photo, there was great concern about the effects of the image would have on children. The New York Times published a current events activity for grades 3-5 to help children make sense of the image (2001b). The quiz posed the six questions that any journalist would ask of this image: Who, What, When, Where, Why, How. The presentation of these questions to students indicates an overall feeling that the coupling of Bert and bin Laden would be somehow confusing or traumatic to young children. An open letter from Ignacio to fans of his site also expressed concern for the welfare of children. In fact, Ignacio explains his decision to take down the site as the killing of an internal child. Ignacio felt he was "kill[ing] the rebellious part of [his] soul… in lieu of the part that dictates to be responsible" (Ignacio 2001). He goes on to say that his main concern is that the site may destroy Bert's ethos:

> my main motivation in killing the site is that i hope it helps stop the idea from germinating anymore into the mainstream. i fear that may destroy the character's credibility with children. i cannot allow that to happen. i myself grew up on sesame street and it was an important part of my childhood. (Ignacio 2001)

Ignacio and others were concerned that this ViRaL text would contaminate innocent children. The hermeneutic method of the New York Times current events quiz—who, what, when, where, why, how—was an attempt to provide children with the same method that Western adults had attempted to use to make sense of the image. Adults offered children an interpretive grid as a way of coping with the trauma of this ViRaL image.

This interpretive grid fell short of its goal to determine the meaning of the image. Far from being some larger commentary on U.S. popular culture, it was later reported that the Bert Laden image was the result of a careless Web search by the company making the protest posters. When creating the posters, the printing company searched the Web and combined a number of the images into a collage. The company included the Bert Laden image in its haste to print and sell the posters. There was no larger intention behind the image, no attempt to provide commentary about the pervasiveness and offensive nature of U.S. popular culture. But my interest in the Bert Laden image and the hermeneutic scramble that followed is not so much in interpretive failure. One of the great lessons of much contemporary criticism is that all interpretation falls short of any "final" goal. This failure to reach "the" interpretation is what keeps many of our disciplinary conversations going. Yet, beyond the short fallings of the various interpretive grids applied to Bert Laden, we might also take another lesson from the episode. That lesson requires a move beyond hermeneutics to a discussion of post-hermeneutic approaches, an expansion that allows us to reconsider what it means to confront various others online and offline.

Interpretation and Community

Poster's discussion of Bert Laden is worth pausing over. His discussion of the image opens up an ambitious

conversation about how we might theorize and build a planetary culture based upon difference. While such a project offers us much in the current rhetorical environment—an environment that is often discouraging to those attempting to make peace—it might also miss an important lesson of the Bert Laden episode. That lesson is that attempts to build community are only part of what is happening online. While Poster attempts to understand how we might build a more peaceful and tolerant global community, the notion of community that the Web most starkly exposes is one that we do not necessarily choose. That is, the Web shows us that we are often in-community with those we might normally consider to be the enemy. This is one of the fascinating lessons of the Bert Laden image and the controversy that followed it. Bert and bin Laden on the same poster indicate an opening, the possibility for communication (and maybe even peace). But glimpsing such possibilities will require a rethinking of community. Understandings of community that are limited to communion or fusion—that is, communities built around essential identities and nationalisms—do not account for all of the collisions happening on the Web. Poster gestures toward this when he discusses how interpretive practices must change in a globalized, networked environment: "As never before, we must begin to interpret culture as multiple cacophonies of inscribed meanings as each cultural object moves across cultural differences" (2006:11). And in his attempts to redefine a planetary culture of differences and to re-work interpretive practices to fit that culture, Poster posits a new foundation for this new community. He argues that the "linkage of humans with machines" can act as "the cornerstone of possible new planetary cultures" (2006:24). By this view, we can build a planetary culture upon what we share—our linkableness. For Poster, what we share is that we all lie exposed and capable of linking to machines. This is his way of attempting to think community in an inessential way. No longer are we able to create clean, discrete communities based on essential identities. A networked, globalized infrastructure means that such clean separations are difficult, if not impossible. By pointing to the linkage of humans with machines, Poster theorizes a model of community that forces us to rethink issues of nationalism, identity, and communication.

Poster argues that Web technologies welcome "transcultural confusion" and that such technologies also "[create] the conditions of intercultural exchange that render politically noxious any culture which cannot decode the messages of others" (2006:11). It is with the use of this term "noxious" that we can begin to see the limits of his attempt to build or theorize a "planetary culture." This term is used multiple times in Poster's analysis of the Bert Laden incident and in his discussion of cultural collisions in general: "Just as the mixing of peoples within a nation renders especially noxious parochial ethnic and racial attitudes, so the mixing of cultural objects in the Internet compels each culture to acknowledge the validity, if not the moral value, of such objects that may be alien and other" (2006:21). In Poster's analysis, the word "noxious" seems to refer explicitly to strands of Islamic thought that posit Western popular culture as a contaminant to Muslim cultures. He cites Ali Asadullah's article "Spice Girls: Exactly the Reason Why Bin Laden Hates the West" as an example of such an outdated mode of thought that relies on monotheism and intolerance.[1] Asadullah's piece for IslamOnline.net was published a month after the attacks of September 11. In it, he argues that hatred of American popular culture is what fuels most radical Muslims. Asadullah expresses disappointment and disgust at a performance by a former member of the Spice Girls (Geri Haliwell) for British troops in Oman. For Asadullah, this event indicates a general lack of concern for Muslim culture and values: "in this time of delicate coalition and consensus building, one would have though [sic] that Britain's Foreign Secretary would have informed troops abroad to be on their very best behavior and not 'piss of the locals', as it were" (Asadullah 2001). Haliwell's performance is read by Asadullah and other Muslims as a slap in the face, and his description of Haliwell and her "bikini-babe dancers" as "so many trampy tarts" reveal how strongly he feels that Western popular culture is an encroachment on Muslim values. Asadullah's argument is that such encroachment is seen as a threat by many Muslims and that this threat leads to a vicious rhetorical feedback loop:

> The issue at hand is the following: Muslims want their cultures, traditions and religious and societal standards to be respected. And those Muslims with extremely conservative or even radical views of the religion sometimes see disrespect in these areas as pretext for armed struggle. The sad thing is that the rhetoric from the West supports that pretext right now. It is rhetoric loaded with language that suggests that if Muslim culture isn't in step with a Western way of living and outlook on life, then it doesn't deserve to compete in the world's marketplace of ideas. (2001)

It is important to note here that Asadullah does not explicitly condemn those who turn to "armed struggle" to resist encroachments upon their culture. In fact, he points the finger at "the rhetoric from the West" when attempting to attach blame. That is, he points the finger at a "them" rather than an "us."

This willingness to point the finger outward (and only sometimes inward) is what seems to trigger Poster's response to Asadullah. Poster paints Asadullah as intolerant and argues that arguments about Western culture being

offensive to Muslims are an example of the "politically noxious" stance of "any culture which cannot decode the messages of others" (2006:11). He argues that positions like Asadullah's are outdated and that globalization thwarts the attempts of any culture hoping to seal itself off from others: "Asadullah's position is exactly the logic that no longer works. With global networked digital communications, one must be especially careful in taking as an offense the legitimate cultural practices of another even if they are on one's own soil" (2006:22). For Poster, our current moment of globalization means that "the collective human intelligence embodied in the Internet is set in a deep cultural opposition to parochialism in general and to versions of monotheism in particular that refuse the condition of cultural pluralism" (2006:22-23). Building upon Jean-Luc Nancy's deconstruction of monotheism, Poster suggests that our current moment does not allow for the comfort of monotheisms:

> The task of building a planetary culture that admits of differences rules out the comfort, if that is what it is, of a single deity, all-powerful, omniscient, reigning with love or with anger over the universe. If that is the case, then the Bert Laden incident is more than an amusing series of cross-cultural confusions but an allegory of changes in contemporary culture, pointing to conditions rife with profound political implications. (2006:24)

As Poster takes on the task of theorizing a planetary culture, he sees warring monotheisms as working against the structure of a globalized, networked world—a world that does not allow any single worldview to dominate.

As he expands this theory of community, we can begin to see the limits of Poster's planetary culture. His approach is in no way simplistic, and he points to our current globalized, networked society as a source of promise and difficulty. However, just as Asadullah looks outward rather than inward, Poster seems to make the same move. His focus is on the "harm" done by anti-American rhetoric: "Journalists and intellectuals such as Asadullah, with his smug air of moral repugnance at Western popular culture, do much harm in justifying the sentiments from which arose the hideous murders of September 11, 2001" (2006:22). Additionally, Poster is confused by critics who see "the imposition of the burqa on women" as anything but a "cause for critique" (2006:269). But just as Asadullah (mis)interprets Western popular culture as the culprit, Poster (mis)interprets monotheism as the root of the problem. It is in this attempt to look outward and interpret the Other that we see the danger of the hermeneutic impulse. Both Poster and Asadullah rely on this impulse alone in attempts to domesticate the opposing metonym. For Poster, Islamic fundamentalists (or, any kind of monotheism) will have to succumb to a network that renders their worldview "noxious." For Asadullah, Westerners will have to tone down their cultural practices if they hope to avoid angering various segments of the Muslim population. Such (mis)interpretations are not wrong. In fact, they are entirely unavoidable. In attempts to make sense of a jarring situation, Poster and Asadullah attempt to domesticate the other via interpretation. That is, they attempt to interpret the other in hopes of creating a better (and more peaceful) community. But these two critics are not talking about "others." They both are talking about an other that has already been interpreted, an other of which they have already made sense. The interpretive move is how we make sense of anything. When confronted with an unknown, we make use of an interpretive grid that allows us to categorize and ultimately control information. But this happens only after the traumatic recognition that we are exposed to the enemy's contamination prior to any choice on our own part.

Poster attempts to define an inclusive planetary culture, but his discussion reaches its limit in his clash with Asadullah. This clash—a clash that Lyotard might call a differend—results in Asadullah condemning all American popular culture and blaming it for Islamic fundamentalism and in Poster labeling Asadullah as part of a "politically noxious" stance that is a poor fit for the contemporary environment. But while Asadullah may be correct in his analysis of Islamic fundamentalists' reaction to Western popular culture and while Poster might be right that fundamentalisms and monotheisms are a poor fit for the current moment of globalization, we should take note of the price we pay for too quickly submitting to the interpretive impulse. Critiquing Poster's position proves to be somewhat counterintuitive as he is attempting to theorize an inclusive planetary culture. However, the rejection of fundamentalisms might provide too solid a foundation for his planetary culture. Poster may move too quickly beyond a key insight that Bert Laden gives us—that the Web exposes a community that "happens to us." Certainly, Web denizens are "building" communities, but they only do so after the experience a being-in-community with the enemy that the Web puts into relief. This experience is a being-in-community with those who we might normally consider to be the enemy. This is what is behind the trauma of Bert and bin Laden being side-by-side, a trauma that Westerners tried to manage by deciphering the code and learning the intention behind the image. As we later learned—and as Poster himself points out—there was no single intention behind the image.

Poster says that our current moment rules out monotheisms, but it's not clear that we can rule out anything or anyone. In fact, the most interesting, disturbing, and hopeful aspect of the current moment is that it welcomes

a broad range of viewpoints, including fundamentalisms. That is, if the network is indeed forcing various culture clashes, many attempts to exclude will be inevitably thwarted. The difficulty of our current networked, globalized situation is that we are unable to exclude anyone in any final way. As we find ourselves in-community with various fundamentalisms, we find that laying the ground rules for a planetary culture that would exclude even the most violent and offensive fundamentalisms is impossible. We might link the limits of Poster's theory of community to his use of the term "planetary culture" and that term's implicit command that all follow the same set of rules. That set of rules for a planetary culture presents a ground, a foundation on which we can build community. However, the Web exposes something more than this, it exposes a community that we do not choose to build and that we do not "have." This community is what Nancy refers to when he says that "community, far from being what society has crushed or lost, is what happens to us" (1990:11, emphasis added). When Poster speaks of a planetary culture based upon our linkages to machines, he seems to be gesturing toward Nancy's discussions of finitude, "the infinite lack of infinite identity." This inability to claim any stable, essential identity is what we share, but it is not one more ground upon which we can build community. Instead, it is a groundlessness that puts us all in the same predicament. Nancy explains it this way: "finitude itself is nothing; it is neither a ground, nor an essence, nor a substance. But it appears, it presents itself, it exposes itself, and thus it exists as communication" (1990:28). Our exposedness to others shows itself in communication. When the Other confronts me, s/he provides a reminder that I cannot always decide which communications I will accept and which I will reject. Further, s/he reminds me that any attempt to define "my" community comes only in response to the community that happens to me—a community of collisions (collusions). We should remember that this is not a problem created by the Web. New technologies do not create a situation in which community happens to us, but they certainly provide a constant reminder of this predicament.

We might even think of the present essay as one more instantiation of how the Web puts opposing voices in community. As my Web text forces Poster and Asadullah to meet here at Fast Capitalism, we would most likely understand this as a confrontation—a face-to-face encounter in which these two metonyms for East and West engage dialectically.[2] However, such an understanding of this encounter would move too quickly beyond the notion that the Web puts Poster and Asadullah into community. Prior to being face-to-face in opposition, they are side-by-side in community experiencing (if indeed it is an experience on the level of cognition) what Nancy would call "something for which we have no name or concept, something that issues at once from a much more extensive communication than of a mere social bond" (1990:11). The community Nancy speaks of is the community we see happening on the Web, a community that happens to us and puts each of us into question. There is little doubt that Web denizens will continue to react to such situations by forming communities based around identities and shared goals, and this is not a bad thing. There is no way outside of such community, and a great deal of good work comes out of it. However, we are well-served to also see the concerted effort to "get together" as a response to that "something for which we have no name or concept." That is, in the face of a disorienting force that gives us to be we will need to create communities and get things done. But such communities can never be "universal" as Poster hopes, for the moment we attempt to create a universal planetary culture—even if that culture is grounded in difference—we run the risk of forgetting the exclusion inherent in any move toward community. It is not a matter of creating community without exclusion. It is a matter of recognizing that no created community is universal. If there is a universal (and I am not sure there is), it is the experience that Nancy gestures toward in The Inoperative Community, an experience that happens prior to and beyond the formation of an individual or a community. That experience is the one that puts us in community with others prior to any choice made on our part.

Post-hermeneutic

It seems clear that attempts to make sense of Bert Laden relied on a distinctly "old" hermeneutic impulse to determine the meaning and authorial intention behind the image. Those attempting to decode this ViRaL image were assuming that a single, intentional author created the poster. Given such assumptions by a general public trying to decode this image, it is entirely reasonable that Poster and others would call for a new hermeneutic that recognizes the intentional fallacy and the complicated circulation of Web texts. But in addition to new interpretive practices, we may also need new understandings of community that attempt to slow our impulse to build an "us" in the face of alterity. If we move beyond hermeneutics to a post-hermeneutics, what else can we take from the image of Bert and bin Laden? What if it is not only, as Poster suggests, a new hermeneutic that is needed, but rather an understanding

of what gets left out altogether by a hermeneutic impulse and the desire to get at the meaning of a text? As the Web introduces us to more texts and more others, we will undoubtedly feel the continued pressure to make sense of things. The structure of the Web sets the stage for the conversations that happen amongst Web denizens. Due to this structure, the Web provides us with a mass of text, and it invites a great deal of interpretative work. But the structure of the Web is important for another reason in that it invites an infinite number of writers. This structure forces us to confront a different kind of relation between readers, writers, and texts, and it frustrates any attempt to pin down stable, final meanings. It also points up a different and expanded notion of community.

The Web sets the stage for interactions between readers and writers in a way that traditional print does not. By inviting infinite writers to a seemingly endless conversation, the structure of the Web allows for ViRaL texts—texts that put different cultures and different realities into contact with one another. Such contact makes for what Diane Davis calls a "depropriative address" that is traumatic and contaminating. It is traumatic in that the address can exceed our attempt to "make sense" of things: "when you address me, no matter what you say to me, you expose in me a readiness to respond (a response-ability) that precedes both desire and will" (2005:200). The contamination of this address affects a self that is always radically exposed to another and response-able—open to a response prior to and beyond any intention to receive an Other. When Western viewers saw Bert (a metonym for a "West" with which they identified) alongside bin Laden (a metonym for Islamic fundamentalism that they considered to be the enemy), they were confronted with a trauma that called into question any clean separation between a community of "us" against "them." "Us" and "Them" were now side-by-side, and this ability to be side-by-side with the enemy is the contaminating effect of the ViRaL Bert Laden image. No longer able to maintain the notion (a fiction from the very start) that "We" are separate from "Them," Western viewers of the image were thrown for a loop. In this way, the coupling of Bert and bin Laden points up "a relation rather than an appropriation or assimilation, exposing a 'we' that is not a function of interpretation and that has nothing to do with commonality, reciprocity, or equality" (Davis 2005: 201). Such an experience of exposedness is a trauma that reminds us of our "extreme proximity and vulnerability" to any and all others (Davis 2005: 202). Given this reminder of vulnerability, it is entirely understandable that journalists and citizens began to apply various hermeneutic grids to the image. In order to deal with the trauma of exposedness—an exposedness that puts "Me" and "bin Laden" in the same community—readers of the image sought out an explanation.

Such searches for meaning via hermeneutic grids are not to be avoided and they are not "bad." As Davis and others have argued, it would be impossible (and damaging) to ditch interpretation. However, what Davis suggests (and what I am suggesting with a re-reading of the Bert Laden controversy) is that we attempt to account for the trauma that puts the hermeneutic gears into motion. Davis explains, via Lévinas, that trauma is where learning happens. For Lévinas, "if it's really learning, then it is necessarily a trauma, a shattering of 'self' and 'world,' not an appropriation but an experience of depropriation and alteration from which there is no return. Learning, in Lévinas's lexicon, takes place via an encounter with the other, who, in addressing me, exceeds my thematizing powers and 'brings me more than I can contain'" (2005:199). And so we might read the image of Bert and bin Laden as a trauma that brought Westerners more than they could contain—something that would make the impulse to interpret and domesticate the image entirely understandable. Web pages and newspaper articles provided various interpretations and explanations of this image, and this hermeneutic scramble was a way to manage the trauma of the ViRaL image. Upsetting the comfortable boundary between "Us" and "Them," Bert Laden was an important learning moment. That moment was almost instantaneously lost in the move to interpret the image and massage the trauma. However, my aim in this essay is to return to that instant of learning. By returning to the trauma that triggered the hermeneutic impulse, we can re-read Bert Laden's ViRaL effect as a way to expand our traditional notions of community.

Re-thinking Community

The traumatic learning experience I am attempting to resuscitate gives us a way expand our notion of what "community" means. Beyond a collection of individuals who share beliefs and goals, community is also the collision we experience and the resulting collusions. The Web invites strange combinations—combinations that belong to no "one" and that do not necessarily represent any kind of concerted effort on the part of collaborators. When we think of collaboration, we might envision a cohesive group that slowly works toward a common goal. Yet, the Web allows for collaboration across space and time, collaboration that happens amongst people with different (and

sometimes competing) agendas, and collaboration amongst those who never intended to be working together. As we have seen with the Evil Bert incident, when these competing groups recognized that they had collaborated, there was a good bit of recoil. The creators of Sesame Street were "outraged." A Reuters spokesperson claimed that the news service hadn't even noticed that Bert was on the poster until Fox News contacted it. Reuters responded "that it is definitely [their] policy not to doctor photographs" (Park 2001). And Ignacio was admittedly "freaked out" by the whole situation. We can read each of these startled reactions as a jolt to those who found themselves sleeping with the enemy.

On the Web and elsewhere, we don't always get to choose our collaborators, and we don't always have a say over who uses our texts. The Web does not create this situation, but it certainly exposes it. Yet, in addition to pointing us to the strange collaborations of the Web, the Evil Bert controversy might provide a bit of hope for the current rhetorical climate. If these two metonyms—Bert and bin Laden—can collaborate (however unwillingly) we might be able to see a sliver of hope for peace. The immediate response to such an argument might be that these two "systems" did not collaborate at all—they collided. And this is certainly true. But the very possibility of this collision (or, collusion) indicates the exposedness of which Davis speaks, an exposedness that points to a new way of understanding community. If we expand our definition of community beyond one of willing contributors and unified goals, we might be able to better formulate a road to peace. Such an understanding would point out that "we" are not cleanly separate from "them"—that each of "us" is exposed to one another prior to any conscious choice. Protestors in Bangladesh did not even notice Bert on their posters. He was, in essence, invisible until Westerners pointed him out. However, protesters participated in the circulation of this image nonetheless. The immediate response from the West was that the protestors found Western popular culture distasteful (this was likely true) and that they were making a political statement by placing Bert on the poster. However, what if we think of things differently: What if the very possibility that Bert and bin Laden can share space on a poster indicates the possibility for peace? What if it indicates that "we" are always exposed and readily contaminable by "them"? What if it indicates that there is no clean separation between us and them? This is one reminder of the ViRaL text.

Rather than attacking this image hermeneutically we might understand it as an indication of what collaboration on the Web really offers. In addition to offering a space where communities can gather toward particular goals (this, most definitely, is happening), the Web offers a place where community happens to us even without any sort of intentional gesture of "let's get together." What if the collision and collusion of bin Laden and Bert (and we should note here that they are not facing-off but are rather side-by-side, in community, facing us) indicates the possibility of an "unchosen" community? What if the combination of these two metonyms for East and West on a protest poster indicates not a community based on a formulated goal but a community of "incomparable ones"? This is the term Davis points to, once again channeling Lévinas:

> 'There must be a justice among incomparable ones,' Lévinas writes, and that means that the challenge is to compare without completely effacing the incomparableness of the 'we' that is exposed in the simple fact of the address; that is, the challenge is...to keep hermeneutic interpretation from absorbing the strictly rhetorical gesture of the approach, which interrupts the movement of appropriation and busts any illusion of having understood. (2005:208)

The very situation of symbolic exchange is an opening to the other regardless of the words that come out. These words may be hateful, dismissive, crude, disgusting. But regardless of content, we can, in some sense, view all discourse as an opening. Such an opening would not reduce Bert and bin Laden to sameness, and it would not proclaim that they have resolved their differences. But it might it start us down a road toward peace.

Endnotes

1. The "References" section of Poster's Information Please lists Asadullah's essay as being published on September 10, 2001, but such a date is impossible considering that the story references a performance by Gerri Haliwell for British troops in Afghanistan on October 6, 2001. Readers from outside the U.S. would recognize that the date on the site—9/10/2001—should be read as October 9, 2001. It may seem that I'm belaboring a small point, and it is not my goal to discredit an entire text based on a small mistake in the "References" section. However, I point to this very minor error to indicate that it is only the beginning of the misunderstandings that happen between the texts of Poster and Asadullah.

2. In an interview in Giovanna Borradori's Philosophy in a Time of Terror, Derrida refers to "Bush" and "bin Laden" as overdetermined metonyms for East and West. I borrow this formulation here to discuss how Bert and bin Laden are stand-ins for East and West—stand-ins that are presented as collaborators on the protest poster(Habermas, Derrida, and Borradori 2003).

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The Disintegration of Fordism and the Transformation of Black Anti-Semitism in America, 1945-2005

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Once abjured by all but the most recalcitrant of crackpots, it is difficult to imagine that, after 50 years, we are witnessing what may very well be a renaissance of anti-Semitism. No longer relegated to the fringes of European political thought "anti-Semitism is now genuinely global – and increasingly angry and delusional..." (Smith 1996:203). Relying on data from the Roth Institute, the U.S. State Department reports a rise in the number of what it calls "major anti-Semitic incidents" in North America as a whole (2008:11) and, importantly, recent data from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) indicate that anti-Semitism is not only on the upswing among some segments of the U.S. population but, importantly, shifting from 'earthly' concerns to more nebulous and sinister issues: "When ADL first began polling the American public in 1964, the predominate negative ethnic stereotypes about Jews dealt with issues of honesty and business ethics. Over time these have been … replaced in the minds of anti-Semites by perceptions of Jewish power in the U.S." (2005:14). Not only has the theme of 'Jewish power' made a comeback, so has the notion of Jewish guilt for the murder of Christ. This shift from a 'nuts and bolts' (concrete) set of issues to a 'cosmological' (abstract) form of anti-Jewish demonology is evidently acute within the African American community.

In this paper I (a) examine the remarkable differences between Black and White attitudes toward Jews during the 1940s such that Blacks were among the least prejudicial segment of the American population and, when they did criticize Jews, those criticisms tended to be relatively mild, specific, and related to mundane social tensions. Here I draw upon a small but rare and early body of data generated by the Frankfurt School during World War Two; (b) situate the growth and transformation of African American antisemitism within the context of the dissolution of the Fordist regime of capital accumulation and diminishing life chances among African Americans; (c) discuss the transformation of Jewish-Black relations from the early 20th Century into the post-war era – especially within the context of the emerging 'Whiteness' of Jews after World War II with an eye toward their changing class interests during the same period such that Jews and Blacks lost their bases for mutual support; and (d) put forward a tentative social-psychological theory of Black anti-Semitism. Ultimately, I hope to make a plausible case that the growth and transformation of Black anti-Semitism from the end of World War II is due to the decline of Fordism and its replacement by a 'flexible' regime of capital accumulation that increasingly leaves African Americans on the sidelines (i.e., in a descending phase of integration vis-à-vis the capital-labor axis). This descending phase of Black participation and social exclusion coincides with changing ethnoracial and class statuses of Jews from about 1940 to the end of the Fordist period such that Black attitudes toward Jews at mid-century reflected a concrete and interconnected relationship that, over time, dissolved into an abstract and disconnected ideology of class abandonment. Specific accusations about Jews in 1945, for example, may have been rooted in the realities of Black-Jewish relations but that abstract, power-centric accusations reflect not contemporary relations but the relationship of alienated Blacks toward the dimly comprehended logic of capital itself. Finally, another contributing factor determining shifting Black attitudes toward Jews is the authoritarian ideological climate intimately bound to changes in the regime of capital accumulation that pins blame for social failures on the devilish Other (a fantasy) rather than on objective social forces that can be changed.

Black Anti-Semitism, 1945-2005

What is anti-Semitism? Concrete, specific, garden-variety recriminations (e.g., "My Jewish landlord is cheap.") fall short of what we consider true anti-Semitism. It would be unsurprising to learn, for example, that some landlords are in fact cheap (tight-fisted) and that some cheap landlords are also Jews. Frequently, garden-variety accusations segue into prejudice, stereotyping, and racism[1] but these kinds of accusations are not, automatically, indicative of pathological Judeophobia. Genuinely anti-Semitic accusations posit, to use the above example, 'cheapness' as identical with Jewishness such that, to be Jewish is to be, essentially, money-personified or the living embodiment of rapacious greed. Anti-Semites believe, in ways that aggrieved renters do not, that Jews are inherently evil and harbingers of impending doom.[2] It appears that Black anti-Jewish attitudes are currently undergoing a transformation from low-intensity, concrete prejudice to abstract anti-Semitism: from mild-as-milk accusations regarding business practices and rent to more extreme and nefarious manifestations. Bias rooted in the minutia of everyday social relations is combatable but Judeophobia, the belief that Jews are "one-dimensional vessels of evil" (Smith 1997:136), represents the kiss of death for democratic sentiments and institutions that protect minorities from the onslaught of political authoritarianism. Are some African Americans the unwitting supporters of the very forces that would subjugate them further?

An April 2004 survey by the Pew Research Center found that 42% of African Americans believe that Jews were responsible for the death of Christ – up from 21% in 1997.[3] The belief that Jews were to blame for the murder of Christ has risen, according to the ADL, over the last three years from 25% in 2002 to 30% in 2005. Black anti-Semitism is of special concern because only a few generations ago African Americans were the least anti-Semitic among minority groups in the United States. Since at least the early 1990s, though, African Americans have consistently expressed elevated levels of anti-Semitic belief according to the ADL: 1992 (37%); 1998 (34%); and 2002 (35%). It appears much has changed regarding the nature of Black feelings toward Jews, both quantitatively and qualitatively.[4] This shift is partly (and perhaps largely) due to structural transformations in the regime of capital accumulation such that Fordism has given way to a 'flexible' regime of exploitation where Blacks are increasingly relegated to the fringes of the economic mainstream and sink-or-swim conservatism of various flavors has exacerbated authoritarian sentiments on both sides of the class divide (Harvey 1990). During the 40s, the majority of Black Americans were situated far differently in relation to capital and, consequently, held different conceptions of class, race, and power. As the Frankfurt School discovered, Blacks also had a different relation with, and conception of, Jews.

The Frankfurt School's Wartime Study of Fordist Labor in America[5]

During WWII the Institute of Social Research (Frankfurt School) undertook a large study of the American working class whereby researchers gathered data from major metropolitan areas including New York, Detroit, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles. Their targets were CIO, AFL, and nonunionized workers. They gathered data on skilled, semi-skilled, and manual laborers. There are also data regarding 'professionals' and office workers (i.e., non-factory employees). Agricultural and mining workers were neglected, as were Southern workers.[6]

The Institute interviewed 566 workers of which 525 were White and 41 (7.2%) were Black. The sample size and composition were recognized problems: "The Negro sample at our disposal is much too small to warrant any definite conclusions." Nonetheless, "It may be useful", they said, "to discuss the reactions of our Negro interviewees as compared with the reactions of the rest of the workers interviewed. Even a small sample may reveal significant differences" (1945:518). For our purposes, though small, this sample is nonetheless priceless because it gives us our earliest, scientific glimpse at Black attitudes toward Jews.

A Climate of Authoritarianism: Overall Worker Anti-Semitism, 1944-1945

The Institute classified the 566 workers into eight distinct groups on the basis of their attitudes toward Jews:

> Type A: Exterminatory. 10.6%. These people were actively violent, vicious anti-Semites who openly favored the extermination of all Jews.

> Type B: Intense Hatred. 10.2%. These were definitely and unwaveringly hostile toward Jews but avoided openly advocating the extermination of Jews. Taken together, Types A and B (20.8%) constituted beliefs that were proto-fascist or "Nazi-like."

Type C: Inconsistently Hostile. 3.7%. These people were outspokenly hostile to Jews and possessed a desire to see Jews regulated or controlled but were inconsistent in this attitude; they exhibited an inner conflict.

Type D: Intolerant. 6.2%. This type of person wanted to avoid Jews, get away from them, and to see legislative action taken to separate Jews from everyone else.

Type E: Ambivalent. 19.1%. These people could not make up their minds. While they were potentially anti-Semitic, they could have gone both ways in terms of their tolerance of Jews. This type felt that Jews had too much power or money, and that something should have been done about it, but they didn't know what should be done. They were undecided.

Type F: Consciously Tolerant/Emotionally Inconsistent. 19.3%. These types were opposed to anti-Semitism at the level of humanitarian ideals and distaste for injustice. The Type F worker may have been mildly intolerant of Jews but was opposed to it at the level of "conscious intentions" so they worked to control any emotional prejudice.

Type G: Anti-discriminatory/Tolerant but still prone to stereotypes visible in friendly criticism. 10.8%. These people did not harbor any dislike of Jews, were opposed to discrimination but did criticize some character traits commonly ascribed to Jews. Their criticism was based, said the Institute, on reasoning if not in facts.

Type H: Absolutely not anti-Semitic. 20.1%. No resentment, no criticism whatsoever.

That more than 20% of the interviewees were in some ways similar to Nazis vis-à-vis their hatred of Jews (an additional 10% were clearly intolerant) came as a surprise to the ISR. Taken together, the first four anti-Jewish categories (A-D) consisted of 30.7% of the sampled workers. When we include ambivalent workers, roughly one half of workers held feelings that ranged from the desire to see Jews destroyed or imprisoned to contradictory feelings of tolerance mixed with scorn and mistrust.

White Rank and File Hostility toward Jews and Blacks

Racists have always enjoyed the smorgasbord of differences that America has to offer. But despite the panoply of languages, skin colors, religious affiliations, and cultural expressions, and despite wave after wave of immigration, two groups continuously stand out as default targets of intolerance and rage: Blacks and Jews. As the ISR put it: "Anti-Negro and anti-Jewish attitudes as expressed by the workers interviewed are more articulate, patently more deeply ingrained than objections against other minority groups voiced by members of different nationality or ethnic groups. This density of prejudice they share with each other" (1945:491). Out of the 525 White workers in the study, 389 answered the two questions below.

Table 1. Percent of workers that mind working with Jews and Blacks

	Jews	**Blacks**
Definite Objections: Mind in general, under any conditions	29.3	30.3
Qualified Objections: Mind, but would work under certain conditions (with some certain types, in a specific situation, when inevitable, etc.)	22.3	10.3
Total Minding	51.6	40.6

Even though Jews and Blacks shared the burden of White racism there were real differences when it came to discrimination against both groups; there was a "difference in the texture of prejudice." In short, the Jew was the phantom menace whereas Blacks were viewed in much more mundane, 'traditional' terms: when representations of Blacks and Jews were held in the mind simultaneously, Blacks were thought of as concrete competition on the job

front whereas Jews functioned as an amorphous threat: "Abstract and remote, the idea of 'the Jew menacing society' comes down to earth in innumerable attempts to 'explain' the Jews' economic 'guilt'. It is expressed in rational terms which disguise the core of the problem, namely, the worker's antagonism to the prevailing social order" (ISR 1945:510-11).

Union Officers, Jewish-Black Relations, and Black Anti-Semitism

Interviewing union officers corroborated the Institute's findings vis-à-vis feelings of rank and file members. It was felt that the greatest point of conflict between Blacks and Jews was not due to shop floor tensions but at the point of exchange (ISR 1945:1128). Jewish "house owners, straw landlords, rental agents, [and] real estate brokers" were perceived as exploiters of Blacks but the view among some labor officials was that the "real" (non-Jewish) powers of exploitation were using Jews as "fronts" or "screens" for gouging people in Black neighborhoods "for the purpose of directing the Negroes' protest against white supremacy into anti-Semitic channels" (ISR 1945:1132). "In general, emphasis is laid on activities of Jews in industry and commerce as responsible for the spread of anti-Semitism among Negroes" (ISR 1945:1133). Even a Jewish organizer, formerly with the ILGWU, "'regrets that Jewish people not rarely are quite callous and insensitive about colored people'" (ISR 1945:1135). After housing, retail trade was seen as the next biggest problem between Jews and Blacks. In total, union officers restricted their understanding of Black resentment toward Jews to the realms of property, money, and exchange dynamics but not to issues of unorganized domestic workers employed by Jews (ISR 1945: 1131). It appears that, though not fully grasping the nature or extent of the problem, union officials were aware of the basic issues, knew that steps had to be taken to alleviate tensions, and that Blacks, when they disliked Jews, did so for particular reasons rather than on the bases of mythical and abstract accusations.

Anti-Semitism among Black Workers during World War II

Black workers during the 40s were primarily hostile to Jews on the basis of specific grievances but were they immune from demonological interpretations of Jews? The ISR sought to measure this difference by comparing White and Black reactions to "Nazi Terror" perpetrated against Jews. "How far" asked the ISR, "has the 'harmless' Negro been swayed by the siren song of his arch-enemies? Does he consider 'the Jew' his enemy? Is he neutral? Does he regard Jews as human beings who can be counted on to act upon rational judgment? Or does he assume that they are his natural friends and allies?" (1945: 518).

Table 2. Percent of Interviewees Who Object to Working with Jews:

	All Whites	Blacks
Definite Objections: Mind in general, under any conditions	29.3	12.2
Qualified Objections: Mind, but would work under certain conditions	22.3	14.6
Total Minding	51.6	26.8

The differences between Blacks and Whites on these two questions are striking (Table 2). But did these questions measure Black anti-Semitism per se or Black attitudes toward Whites in general? (cf. Cose 1993:157). "It may be said that a colored worker, if given a chance, can be expected not to reject the opportunity of breaking down race barriers, and thus would readily work with any white person – regardless of the white person's creed or ethnic origin" (ISR:

520). We may wonder about their reasoning but the underlying question was sound: were Black workers thinking of Jews as Whites or Jews as ethno-racially distinct from generic Whites?[7] Gurland pointed to this tendency for Blacks to see Jews as the face of white supremacy: "It certainly is not the Negroes' fault that 'white supremacy' in the cities is personified by the Jewish businessman, store-keeper, pawnbroker or landlord. And they cannot possibly have sufficient information, hardly available even for statistical purposes, on actual distribution of ownership. They cannot know how many Jewish landlords are real estate owners in name only (acting as a 'front' for big corporations and non-Jewish banks), and how many Jewish stores are nothing but retail outlets for non-Jewish chains, manufacturing combines, etc" (ISR 1945: 530). To clarify the issue of Jews as White and Jews as distinctly Other, Blacks were asked questions pertaining to the Nazi persecution of Jews. Did Blacks specifically condemn "Nazi terror" against Jews?

Table 3. Answers on Treatment of Jews under Nazi Rule:

	All Whites	**All Blacks**
Definitely disapprove of Nazi terror	53.1	65.9
Halfheartedly disapprove of Nazi terror	23.2	12.2
Definitely approve of Nazi terror	17.9	9.7
Don't know, no opinion, no answer	5.8	12.2
Total %	100	100

Blacks were far more likely to reject Nazi terror than were Whites, they were significantly less likely to approve of Nazi terror, and were less ambivalent (if we can treat "halfheartedly disapprove" as ambivalence). In absolute, cross-historical terms there is a natural inclination to try and compare the 1944-45 data with contemporary data of the kind the ADL periodically gathers or that the Pew Research Center recently generated. Is it true that African Americans are today three times more anti-Semitic than their wartime predecessors? For one thing, the two sets of data are not easily compared. Today, there are no concentration camps and mass executions of Jews to condition popular opinion and the ADL surveys do not contain questions that probe levels of support for things like mass persecution. The ISR found that in 1945, nearly 10% of Black workers interviewed approved of extermination and/or the imprisonment of Jews in concentration camps. Relative to White responses the Black workers were much more immune to fascist fantasies of violence but if today we were to find that almost 10% of the African American population could positively imagine the mass extermination or imprisonment of Jews we would be shocked. A more optimistic figure was that nearly 66% of Black workers rejected the Nazi program outright.

African Americans and the Fordist Regime of Capital Accumulation

It is sometimes claimed that economic conditions are not related to levels of anti-Semitism. Maurice Samuel's classic formulation tells us that hunger may make people hallucinate but it cannot account for why the hungry hallucinate about Jews in particular (1940). Income or wage levels are poor predictors of anti-Semitic feelings. Job loss does not convert people into anti-Semites. It is not simply that African Americans are disproportionately prone to receive low wages or suffer high rates of unemployment, but that millions of Blacks are being shutout altogether from the capital-labor axis: "low-skilled Black labor – which is most of Black labor – has gone from plantation to factory to permanent underemployment and unemployment" (Katz-Fishman and Scott 1998:311). Joblessness and low wages are tied to low quality education and substandard health care, greater exposure to punitive social control, degraded primary and secondary group socialization, as well as the more subjective aspects of hope, optimism, and

self-esteem associated with the powerful myth of upward mobility and the "American Dream". Economic crises are associated with the flourishing of anti-Semitism because they create favorable conditions for the work of ideological entrepreneurs to articulate pre-existing, malleable cultural codes (Volkov 1979) that use prejudicial references to mythical Jews such that, according to demagogues like Farrakhan, it is somehow significant and revealing that a Jew on the island of St. Thomas, Barbados bought and sold slaves in 1670 (The Historical Research Department of The Nation of Islam 1991:231). In short, when the hope for mainstream integration turns to permanent exile on the margins of society, explanations turn from the mainstream to the margins, from the factual to the fantastical.

From the beginnings of the First World War through to the Second World War there was a mass exodus of Blacks from the South into the Northeast, Midwest, and West, moving out of farm jobs and into urban-industrial employment. In 1920, Du Bois wrote:

> As workers in northern establishments we are getting good wages, decent treatment, healthful homes and schools for our children. Can we hesitate? COME NORTH! Not in a rush – not as aimless wanderers, but after quiet investigation and careful location. The demand for Negro labor is endless. (in Lewis 1995:530).

Essentially, we can think of this as the beginning of an ascending phase of relative Black integration into Fordist production and labor relations where "southern black migrants took their place at the bottom of ... the occupational hierarchy" (Nelson 2001: xxviii). But the idea was, of course, not to stay at the bottom of the economic order. Indeed, Blacks were drawn, in part, by the "illusive American dream" (Katz-Fishman and Scott 1998: 313).

Fordism was a complex of bureaucratized and regulated systems of buying and selling labor power; state intervention; a relatively high degree of worker discipline; business unionism (labor collaboration); highly productive labor processes and mass production techniques based on the technically rationalized detailed division of labor that separates mental conceptualization from physical execution; product standardization; high wages; job security; legal protections and appeals systems for workers; mass consumption; sufficient leisure time; and corporate cultivation of popular monoculture (Harvey 1990:125-40; Harrison and Bluestone 1998:84-85). As Harvey puts it, "Postwar Fordism has to be seen … less as a mere system of mass production and more as a total way of life" (1990:135).

Even though they faced discrimination and harassment, from 1945 to 1970 African Americans benefited, unevenly, as did other minorities, from postwar prosperity: their wages rose, their standard of living increased, poverty levels declined, migration from the South continued and African Americans penetrated the blue collar manufacturing sectors in the West, Midwest, and Northeast (Gordon, Gordon, and Nembhard 1994:516). And the economic gains, supported by progressive anti-poverty programs, were real.[8] Analyzing historical changes in White and Black pay differentials, Alexis found that from 1940 to 1980 "full-time employed African-American men with less than five years of experience moved from 46.7% of the white wage to 84.2 percent. Those with 36-40 years experience had their relative wage increase from 39.8% to 68.5 percent, impressive gains" (1998:369). And Black inroads into organized labor, as well, were substantial. "By the mid-1970s," says Honey, "black workers in a core of unionized factory jobs had torn down most Jim Crow barriers within their workplaces and unions, after decades of painful effort." But, "Just as their labors began to really bear fruit in the form of family-wage jobs distributed on an equal basis, factory closings began to undercut all they had fought to achieve. The dawning progress of black industrial workers made the deindustrialization of parts of North America seem all the more disastrous" (1999: 322).

African Americans and Post-Fordism

In the late 1960s and early 70s Fordism began to wane: overproduction, market saturation, and related (rigid) limits to capital accumulation prompted a turn to corporate restructuring, and market reconfiguration that "ruptured the social order associated with Fordism" (Krier 2005:63). The state's initial response, printing money, ushered in a deadly wave of inflation "that was eventually to sink the postwar boom" (Harvey 1990: 142). "Flexibility" (essentially a war on the working class) "with respect to labour processes, labour markets, products, and patterns of consumption" (ibid:147) entailed an attack against the welfare state, entitlements, unions, liberal policies in general, and saw the emergence of new forms of regressive, authoritarian politics and a new emphasis on technology and technical education (Harvey 1990). Blacks were among the first to feel the effects and they experienced an eventual reversal of their postwar gains. Alexis reports that, after 1970, Black men (aged 36-45) experienced a drop in labor force participation rates of 5-6% compared to a 1.3% drop for Whites (1998:369). And for Black men (aged 46-

54) labor force participation dropped nearly 10% during the 1970s – compared to a drop of 3.5% among their White counterparts (ibid.). Vetter and Gallaway (1992: 698) substantiate these changes by charting African American unemployment rates increasing from 9% in 1950 to nearly 14% in 1975). Between 1975 and 1987 Blacks were essentially routed from jobs in durable goods manufacturing with a displacement rate of nearly 50% compared to a 21.7% decline for White workers (Alexis 1998:371-72). It is clear that African Americans are, in relation to the main currents of the capital-labor axis, in a descending phase. In the Midwest it was, says Alexis, "an unmitigated disaster" and, generally, wherever White workers suffered job losses and unemployment, African Americans experienced twice the suffering (ibid.). Rifkin bleakly pronounced that Blacks, today, are '"hopelessly trapped in a permanent under-class. Unskilled and unneeded, the … value of their labor has been rendered virtually useless by the automated technologies that have come to displace them in the new high-tech global economy"' (in Katz-Fishman and Scott 1998:326).

An October 2004 Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) labor force status of high school graduates report indicates that among the "civilian, non-institutionalized population" the unemployment rate among Black high school graduates exceeded 25%. If this rate were generalized across the entire population we would be in the midst of a second Great Depression (see Willie and Willie 2005:491; Morris and Western 1999:633). Higher proportions of foreign-born Blacks were, in 2003, participating in the labor force (74.5%) than were native-born Blacks (63.2%). Although Blacks constitute 12% of the labor force in the United States, according to a June 2004 Monthly Labor Review report, in 2003 they made up 14% of those working part time "for economic reasons"; 20% of the unemployed; 24% of the long-term unemployed; 21% of the "marginally attached workers" – marginally attached workers are those that are "available for work and had searched for work during the prior 12 months but who were not currently looking for work" (see also Bates 1995).

African American mothers also had the highest employment participation rate among mothers in any segment of the population in 2003. For mothers with children under the age of three: Blacks (67%); Whites (57.8%); Hispanics (47.9%); Asian (55.1%).[9] African Americans, in 2003, spent on the average one month longer searching for jobs or being unemployed (22.7 weeks) than did Whites (18.0).[10] And when they were working full time, weekly earnings among Black men were lower than for any other segment of the population except for Hispanics: Asians ($772); Whites ($715); Blacks ($555); and Hispanics ($464). Weekly wages among full time working women were predictably lower than males: Asians ($598); Whites ($567); Blacks ($491); and Hispanics ($410). A June 2003 report (covering the period 1996-2000) from the BLS reveals great discrepancies between Blacks and Whites relative to retirement: whereas gender distributions among Whites was nearly equal for men (52%) and women (48%) it was dramatically different among Blacks: only 38% of eligible retirees were men whereas 62% were women; mean income among Black retirees was 27% lower than their White counterparts; and Blacks were 33% less likely than Whites to live free of rent or mortgage payments (Bahazi 2003).

During Reagan's first term, Michael Harrington wondered if it was not the case that Blacks were becoming not only marginalized but "completely superfluous" members of society (1984:123). It appears as though his fears were warranted. Increasingly, Blacks are no longer required or desired as sellers of labor power. This was precisely the problem that Sidney Willhelm raised (1986:219) when he observed that African Americans were assuming the role of surplus labor power that went even beyond the structural requirements of the reserve labor army: "will capitalists be content only to impoverish Blacks whose labor can no longer be absorbed through economic expansion or will they resort to a solution to dispose of such people?" It is difficult to imagine mass liquidation but the neglect of the working poor and unemployed in America represents a kind of liquefying structural solution to a surplus population that is seen by many conservatives as constituting a moral and financial drag on society. Through stereotyping Blacks as a homogenous mass of irresponsibility the White right has done its part in segregating even middle class and financially buoyant African Americans into isolation while the Black right stoke 'the flames of separatism, challenging blacks with the question of whether whites are really worthy of integration" (Anderson 2000:264-65).

Other 'solutions' are clearly under way. Incarceration of Blacks, especially young, unskilled, unemployed males, is one such measure. During the 1980s and 90s incarceration became, according to Western, "a common life event in the lives of disadvantaged and minority men" such that "[b]y 1999, over one-fifth of black noncollege men in their early thirties had prison records" (2002:526). Incarceration became, quite literally, a way to "solve" the problem of unwanted labor power as the work force polarized during the 1980s and 90s (ibid.). Moreover, incarceration has the effect of lowering future wages of ex-inmates by 10 to 20% and lowering the rate of wage growth by 30% of their life course (ibid:541). Solutions abound from the passive to the aggressive: from poor access to health care, decaying schools, police brutality, institutional racism, etc. to willful inaction on the part of the state to the plight of whole

populations facing natural disasters.

The problem is not some fluke of our domestic economic condition but part and parcel with the logic of globalization (Wilson 1996-97:568-71). "The popular classes of the centers [core countries] benefited," says Amin, "after the end of the Second World War, from an exceptional situation based on the historic compromise the working classes forced on capital. This compromise ensured security for the majority of workers in large factories organized on Fordist principles." But the situation has changed in the post-Fordist period:

> The major social transformation which characterized the long period of the second half of the twentieth century can be summarized in a single suggestive figure: the proportion of the popular classes in a precarious position has gone from less than a quarter to more than half of the global urban population and this phenomenon of pauperization has reappeared on a significant scale in the developed centers themselves. The total number of people in this destabilized urban population has gone in a half century from less than 250 million to more than one and one-half billion individuals ... (Amin 2004:38-39).

When we look beyond stock and bond performance, federal domestic policies were not kind to workers, the working poor, and the unemployed during the 1990s. Measured in 2001 dollars, the "poverty gap" in America rose by more than 5% from 1993-1999 and "child care costs rose sharply for a high percentage of poor households after Clinton slashed federal welfare support for single mothers" (Pollin 2003:21-22, 45-46; Wilson 1996-97). Add to this, zealous investments in the state security and incarceration apparatus, rising costs of education, prohibitively expensive housing, the evaporation of full-time employment, and the rise of a persistent, conspiratorial form of right-wing demagoguery and the full authoritarian potential of the moment comes into view. Black anti-Semitism has to be seen within this larger context of a multi-front war waged against the working poor and unemployed, generally, and large segments of the African American community in particular.

So long as industrialization and post-war prosperity were on the upswing, and African Americans were being drawn into the industrial labor pool, their attitudes toward Jews were, we might say, 'friendly.' Reporting on data generated in 1963, Heller and Pinkney found that Blacks harbored generally positive attitudes toward Jews such that the latter were considered to be "helpful to the cause of Negro rights" (on average only 9% of surveyed blacks thought of Jews as "harmful to the cause of Negro rights" and, interestingly, Jews as a whole were felt, by leaders of the African American community, to be as helpful to the Black cause as Catholic priests (1965: 367-69). During the 60s it was generally believed that anti-Semitism was, if not extinct, then "a disappearing problem" such that between 1964 and 1974 Jewish defense organizations did not bother with much polling (Rosenfield 1982:431-32). One might recall that this was the backdrop for the late-50s and early-60s optimism classically expressed in Beyond the Melting Pot that posited the continual and eventual harmonization of racial and ethnic relations. However, part of what was melting in the 60s was also the distinction in the mind of Black America that Jews formed a discrete status separate from 'White' America. Jewish social mobility during the 20s and 30s was limited but the post-war period saw a dramatic change in the status of Jews and their integration into 'White' society (Brodkin 1998: 33-52).

The Transformation of Jewish Ethnoracial and Class Status During the Fordist Period and the Alienation of Blacks

Fordist-era hegemony involved a degree of racial integration unknown by previous generations[11] and Black-Jewish relations in the first half of the 20th Century were relatively harmonious.[12] Before World War Two, Jews worked on many fronts to support Black civil rights and "played an important role in advocating that equality be fully extended to the nation's African American citizens" (Feingold 1995:112). During and immediately after the war Jewish defense organizations, most notably the American Jewish Committee, discovered that Jews and Blacks were routinely lumped together in the racist and authoritarian imagination (Svonkin 1997:37-38) and that a rational course of action for Jews included aid to Blacks.

At the end of World War II the Jewish passage to Whiteness was still negatively incomplete in the minds of perhaps as many as half the workers interviewed in the Frankfurt School's labor study and that, for Blacks too, Jews were something positively other than generically White. Though on their way, Jews were, still, not 'White.' Roediger maps a phenomenology of Jewish racial assignment[13] moving from, in the case of Eastern Europeans, a subhuman swarm before the turn of the century, to a discrete but inferior 'race' before World War II, to an 'ethnicity' after the war, to 'ethnically white' by the early 60s and, finally, to generic White (ibid:3-27). What were the social dynamics that led to the whitening of Jews?

According to Brodkin several factors were decisive in the whitening of Jews and other "Euromales" and their eventual assimilation into mainstream American life: the association of Judenhass with Nazi ideology meant that anti-Semitism was no longer respectable in the postwar era;[14] from 1940 onward government census categories no longer distinguished between native and immigrant origins resulting in "an expanded notion of whiteness"; our conceptions of being shifted from "nature and biology" to "nurture and culture"; the postwar economic boom, coupled with expanded legal protections, eased restrictions on Jewish socio-economic mobility – and Jews were well-situated to take advantage of the new demand for "professional, technical, and managerial labor, as well as on government assistance in providing it"; the GI Bill meant an educational explosion and expanded home ownership; the push of urban renewal and the pull of suburbia – those barred from suburban sprawl, like Blacks, were denied access to the American "middle class" (1998:35-52). Importantly, the dynamics and institutions that drew Jews into White, 'middle class' American life largely excluded Blacks from participation in any comparable manner. For example, the benefits of postwar programs like the GI Bill were not widely enjoyed by Blacks: "The military, the Veterans Administration, the U. S. Employment Service … and the Federal Housing Administration effectively denied African American GIs access to their benefits and to new educational, occupational, and residential opportunities" (Brodkin 1998:43). In labor organizations, too, Jews came into conflict with Blacks as early as the 50s. 'The years following the merger' of the AFL and CIO 'were marked' says Hill, "by widespread disappointment among African American workers as the AFL-CIO failed to implement the civil rights policy adopted with much fanfare at the time of the labor federation's formation…. Soon after the merger, Black workers protested against the continuing pattern of discriminatory practices by many AFL-CIO-affiliated unions, both industrial and craft" (1998:264).

Earlier in the century liberal Jews had been supporters of Black equality and identified with Blacks to a great extent. Roediger quotes a 1912 edition of the Jewish Daily Courier commiserating with Blacks: "'In this world…. the Jew is treated as a Negro and a Negro as a Jew'" (2005:98). Later Jews would be supporters of the NAACP and work within labor organizations, especially the CIO, radical political parties, and other institutions to promote Black equality. However, by the early 60s the liberal Jewish alliance with African Americans began to destabilize and, after the Six-Day War in 1967 and the Ocean Hill – Brownsville incident in 1968, Jewish commitment to Black civil rights would never be the same (Staub 2002:45-75; Hill 1998:284-86). As the Black civil rights movement gained steam:

> Jewish communities were surprisingly resistant ... because of an uneasy perception that 'Jewish' schools and neighborhoods were among the first to be targeted for desegregation. Furthermore, there was a growing sense that blacks were not 'worthy' of the gains they demanded because they sought to have handed to them advantages that Jews had worked incredibly hard to achieve. There was also the perception – unevenly applied and hotly contested – that blacks were ant-Ssemites who took out their resentments and frustrations most especially on the Jew whom they way only as a different shade of white person (Staub 2002:76).

The fear of Black anti-Semitism was exacerbated with the emergence of militant Black movements that rejected White America including resentment toward Jewish success.[15] Jews were still willing to support Black political aspirations on a case-by-case basis, Harold Washington in Chicago for example, but Jewish support for Jesse Jackson in his 1984 Presidential bid was low. Jackson not only referred to New York City as "Hymietown" but also supported the Palestinian cause and failed to distance himself sufficiently from Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam (Levine 1996:239; Feingold 1995:112).

Jews completed the journey to whiteness but were beginning to be seen by some in the African American population as not merely White in a generic sense but also the face of White power and privilege.

The years immediately following World War II found Jews joining in the civil rights movement but the combination of their ethnoracial shift toward generically white and their developing middle and upper class interests brought them to an asynchronous relationship with Black America; "White immigrant groups, once they achieve integration into American society, defend their own privileges and power when confronted with demands from Blacks" (Hill 1998:279). That Blacks perceived Jews as an elite was not mere illusion. Katz-Fishman and Scott report that, by the 1990s:

> Clearly, American Jews had a presence and, in most instances, were overrepresented in the power elite of American society – on top corporate boards, among the rich and the superrich, in the cabinet, in Congress, and in the military. They were also overrepresented among the most highly educated Americans, among the professional and managerial class, and among the cultural and media artists and moguls. With this fabulous success of the American Jews and their integration to society's power elite also came their embrace of the worldview and ideology of the ruling class, distancing them more than ever from their advocacy for the truly disadvantaged in the United States (1998:336-37).

But even though Jews figure into the composition of the power elite we must reiterate that 'overrepresented' does not in any way constitute a majority. Jews are, just like other Whites and Blacks, members of the working class. In what follows I examine the emergence of 'the Jew' as the representation of post-Fordist forms of social power.

The Social Psychology of Black Anti-Semitism

Even though Blacks did not enjoy postwar integration and ascendancy into the ranks of the middle class the way Jews had they did experience an ascending phase of integration into the Fordist system of work, rising wages, and consumption. But the limits of Black integration were not only structural but ethno-racial as well: unlike Jews, Italians, Greeks, and Irish, Blacks were not, evidently, going to become White. By the time Jewish class interests crystallized around a new set of privileges, Black-Jewish relations became fraught with elements that began to slip beyond the threshold of empirical reality. This is an important distinction: the contradictory relations between Jews and Blacks during the Fordist period were predominantly concrete and specific. Blacks had real grievances and they had empirically-based complaints with some Jews – specifically those that barred their way to union positions, high-wage jobs, housing, and so forth. But Jews were not, at this time, the objects of demonological fantasy. As Fordism gave way to flexibility in the 70s and 80s, the concrete nature of Black-Jewish relations gave way to abstract ideologies including those centered on Jews as power-mongering Christ killers. In the Post-Fordist world there is an ever-decreasing need for African American participation in the 'jobless future' and we now face, potentially, a future where millions of citizens are abandoned and dealt with as unwanted ballast.

Post-Fordist insecurities and attending intellectual currents opened the political field in the 80s to populist, authoritarian, racist, and anti-immigrant political appeals (Phillips 2006; Worrell 1999; Harvey 1990). The White Right is filled to the brim with paranoid authoritarians who have cultivated a veiled anti-Semitic code but the African American community has its own anti-Semites and the references to Jews are often explicit. Whites may see Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam as a bunch of eccentrics but Singh makes a case for not underestimating this kind of ideology as it is embedded in a long history of American paranoid politics (1997:188) and can be linked at times to mainstream political agendas (recall that the Rainbow Coalition was hindered by its association with the NOI). That Blacks will convert anti-Semitic fantasy to an active, organized project of violence against Jews is unlikely but what it does accomplish is the political disorganization of the working and unemployed poor.

Collective thought is poorly comprehended as a mere reflection of material interests or an economic mode of production. But shared ideas are inextricably bound to the forms and dynamics of social organization and class relations. Durkheim convincingly argued that collective representations of the sacred (both pure and impure) are moral communities in their outward, transfigured forms. If a person looks into a mirror they see a reflection of their self. If a community could look into a mirror it would see a god (its positive sacred form). Evil (negative god) and its personifications are "nothing other than collectives states objectified; they are society itself seen in one of its aspects" (Durkheim [1912] 1995:416).[16] And each aspect of society is reflected in ideological variances (i.e., the wartime differences between Black and White anti-Semitism and the divergence between American and European forms). The differences serve to highlight the truth that ideology follows the developments of social organization (Cohn 1993). The fantasy Jew is like any other devil: it is a form of consciousness and logic of representation, peculiar to some segment of society, devoted to explaining power, inequality, contingency, injustice, and the unseen workings of impersonal forces.[17] Mills echoes this point: anti-Semitic conspiracy among Blacks "is an attempt to think the whole" that follows "a general tendency in complex modern societies for their human-made character to disappear, so that their causality becomes impersonal, fetishized, like a force of nature. Things happen but no one is to blame…. The conspiracy theories of the oppressed refuse this causal evisceration, or causal misdirection, by expressly categorizing the group's plight as a state of oppression (which presupposes the hostile agency of other humans)" (1998:154). In the case of Black anti-Semitism, the hostile other is the Jew – the transfigured image of White wealth and Black immiseration.

Within anti-Semitic ideology, 'the Jew' is tantamount to this impure other representing social pathology and exploitation. Given all the super-human capacities and omnipresent activities attributed to Jews, within anti-Semitic propaganda and paranoid perception, nowhere do we find an alternative explanation to refute the conclusion that 'the Jew' is none other than the monstrously awesome power of an impure society condensed into a unitary image. Where one feels the trauma of capitalism but is unable to attribute the effects to specific processes, the 'Jew' serves

as the symbolic shorthand. 'The Jew' in Black anti-Semitism is the smirk of post-Fordist flexibility as seen from the vantage point of outcasts at the bottom of society. What other force but capital could account for the supposed machinations of the diabolical Jew? Only one force has the power to destroy gods, scuttle nations, deliver chaos and mass death, and steer the destinies of the planet: global capital. But for most people 'capital' is an abstraction, formless, impersonal ether, whereas 'the Jew' is a ready-made envelope.

When minority groups embrace anti-Semitism it is tantamount to embracing an ideology that guarantees subjugation – a fantasy cannot be defeated. According to Gurland, anti-Semitism operates such that "Minority groups, which only a democratic system of government can protect, are to be pitted against each other and made to disregard and forsake democratic processes and institutions" (ISR 1945:518). Insofar as African American's are concretely anti-Semitic then there are real grounds for citizens to work together toward rolling back the political and social forces that would keep a significant segment of Black America in a permanent state of poverty and subjugation. Khalid Abdul Muhammad, Farrakhan's right hand man in the Nation of Islam, accused Jews of "sucking the blood" of Black Americans at his now infamous speech at Kean College in 1993 (Lipset and Raab 1995:102). While the idea that Jews are responsible for devitalizing the Black community is absurd it is nonetheless true that Black Americans have been and continue to be cruelly exploited. But it is not Jews that are vampires; it is capitalism itself, which Marx repeatedly characterizes, literally, as vampirism. In a vampire society, by definition, the majorities are fated to be consumed by a handful of elites. It is true that some among the power elite are Jews but it is not their Jewishness that makes them thirsty for blood and profits. Rather, it is their class position as masters of capital that make them vampires. In the absence of dialectical materialism the exploited will grasp the nature of exploitation fetishistically such that, for example, to be Jewish is to be essentially a vampire.

Durkheim noted that even the most absurd and distorted fantasy is rooted in some kernel of concrete reality. Anti-Semitism is a kind of reversal. It is true that (a) where there is slavery you will find Jews ... and Protestants, Catholics, and so forth, but the anti-Semite inverts the terms: (b) where there are Jews you will find slavery. The result is to convert the accidental into an essential trait of Jewish Being. Then the demagogue is left with only the functional operation of constructing the myth backwards from the terminal point of Jewish essence: the secret Jew, Columbus, financed by a cabal of Jews, for the purpose of enslaving millions of Africans, and so on – what is this but a mythical, fetish reading of globalization? In truth, the bedrock upon which antisemitism is rooted is not the empirical Jew or the mental aberrations of the anti-Semite but the primary contradictions of capitalist society refracted through a particular historical class and ethnoracial trajectory.

My interpretation of the available data is such that Black anti-Semitism is highly contradictory but tending to edge into the realm of fantasy and will continue to do so unless countervailing forces are thrust upon it. What is unknown, importantly, is the degree of ambivalence masked by contemporary poll data. People are seldom fully committed to a demonological worldview (with Freud, the presence of one tendency does not preclude the presence of countervailing tendencies within the psyche). Given the nature of the data available, conclusions must be provisional and qualified.

Conclusion

In the preceding I tried to make a plausible case that the growth and transformation of Black anti-Semitism from the concrete to the abstract from the end of World War II is due to the decline of Fordism and its displacement by a 'flexible' regime of capital accumulation that reversed Black postwar gains – tantamount to a descending phase of integration vis-à-vis the capital-labor axis. This descending phase of Black socio-economic participation, coincides with changing ethnoracial and class statuses of Jews from about 1940 to the end of the Fordist period such that Black attitudes toward Jews at mid-century reflected a concrete and interconnected relationship that, over time, dissolved into an abstract and disconnected ideology of class abandonment. I also linked shifting Black attitudes toward Jews to the authoritarian ideological climate intimately tied to changes in the regime of capital accumulation that pushes thought away from sociological explanations and toward fantasy.

One of the contradictions of Fordism was the relative pacification of labor. Expectations for participation in the main currents of the capital-labor axis, the mythology of class mobility, dreams of financial independence, home ownership, rising wages, increasing access to credit, job security, labor representation, geographic mobility, increasing levels of education, and consumerism drained away excess energies that are now accumulated in economically

deactivated segments of the working class. As David Sears might put it, the issue is a simple one: "get these people some honest jobs so they can go to work..." (1994:480). But African Americans are being pushed out of even bottom-of-the-barrel jobs for a complex set of reasons made visible in the ongoing wave of immigration, especially among Latinos, after changes to the Immigration and Nationality Act in 1965 which added fifteen million immigrants to the labor pool over a twenty-five year span – from 1970 to 1996 the number of immigrants in America basically doubled (Morris and Western 1999: 630; see also Kaplan 2006 and, especially, Sears 1994: 480).

The African-American community, not just the poor but also all Black America (Anderson 2000:264) is under siege. Why anti-Semitism? On the one hand it is true that Black reactionary organizations such as Nation of Islam promote anti-Semitic propaganda. But propaganda does not function in a vacuum. If anti-Semitism is a 'social disease' it is because society itself is diseased. Anti-Semitism exists because society has failed to achieve the form of an ethical order in which all members of society are afforded the opportunity to participate, to be productive (even if that simply means to alienate labor power), to be a person, and have a life project.

In the case of the unethical, arbitrary social order alienation comes with an excessive 'price' – that which is leftover from the 'exchange' is, to use ·i·ek's phrase, a "plague of fantasies" – demonological hatred, periodic destruction, that is. If a society has failed to raise itself above the status of an ethical abomination then there will be anti-Semitism, or, in the absence of the 'Jew' there will be its functional equivalent. In the end, Marx was correct: "The religious reflections of the real world can, in any case, vanish only when the practical relations of everyday life between man and man, and man and nature, generally present themselves to him in a transparent and rational form" (1976: 173). Anti-Semitism is not a religion but it is a cult. The 'Jew' is the anti-Semite's negative social form and object of devotion.

Will Black America be wooed into supporting arch-reactionary programs or movements? Not likely, but reaction wins not only by active mobilization but also by diversionary demobilization and tilting at windmills. For decades social observers have noted that the poor and downtrodden often feel no rage at all about their plight (Williams 2006: 230; Shipler 2004: 24; Jahoda et al 2002; DiFazio 1998) and, even if they feel anger, see no way to couple that energy to a progressive political or social movement. Anti-Semitism generates profits for demagogues, resentment in subscribers, and, in the case of Black America, an emotional substitute for the real and untouchable target: capital.

Endnotes

1. Anti-Semitism is not another flavor of generic racism or prejudice (Smith 1997, 1996; Postone 1980). In no case of racism and prejudice can we find beliefs that approximate the anti-Semitic paranoia that Jews are behind a global conspiracy to enslave the world; that Jews run a secret world government (e.g., ZOG); that Jews are behind finance capital and international communism; that Jews were instigators of most revolutions; that the African slave trade was a Jewish plot, etc. Anti-Semitism, unlike any form of racism, is capable of embodying any and all accusations from the petty to the most otherworldly.

2. This distinction between abstract and concrete forms of hatred falls in line with the main currents of critical social scientific and historical analysis over the last couple of generations that treats 'the Jew' of anti-Semitic propaganda as a socially constructed object. Adorno, Maurice Samuel, Sartre, Norman Cohn, Gavin Langmuir, David Norman Smith, and Slavoj ·i·ek have all put forward constructionist explanations that distinguish between concrete and demonological Judenhass. The most comprehensive examination of the literature and defense of the constructionist perspective has been put forward by Smith (1996).

3. The Pew Research Center, "Belief that Jews were Responsible for Christ's Death Increases", April 2, 2004. This figure is probably aggravated due to the release of the movie, The Passion of the Christ, the sadomasochistic film by Mel Gibson that has contributed, according to "Anti-Semitism Worldwide 2003/04", to an upsurge of anti-Semitic propaganda and sentiment in the United States and on the internet. However, the rate of change among Blacks compared to Whites is startling: in March 1997, 19% of Whites believed that Jews were responsible for killing Christ compared to 31% of Blacks. In March 2004, 24% of Whites believed in Jewish guilt for the death of Christ while the Black rate shot up to 47%. The Pew study shows that men and women 50 or older with college degrees are relatively immune from this belief and the kind of anti-Jewish propaganda found in Passion of the Christ. Some college was evidently worse than high school degrees or among those with less than high school degrees. For background on Gibson's anti-Semitism and the resurgence of radical Catholic anti-Semitism see the Southern Poverty Law Center's "The New Crusaders" report (http://www.splcenter.org/intel/intelreport/article.jsp?aid=719).

4. The ADL's data is based on phone surveys in which respondents were asked agree ("probably true") or disagree ("probably false") to "index statements" designed to measure antisemitic feelings. The "Anti-Semitic Index" is comprised of the following questions: (1) Jews stick together more than other Americans; (2) Jews always like to be at the head of things; (3) Jews are more loyal to Israel than America; (4) Jews have too much power in the U.S. today; (5) Jews have too much control and influence on Wall Street; (6) Jews have too much power in the business world; (7) Jews have a lot of irritating faults; (8) Jews are more willing than others to use shady practices to get what they want; (9) Jewish business people are so shrewd that others don't have a fair chance at competition; (10) Jews don't care what happens to anyone but their own kind; (11) Jews are (not) just as honest as other businesspeople (Anti-Defamation League 2005:7).

5. Over the last few years I have explored various aspects of the Frankfurt School's neglected labor study (Amidon and Worrell, Forthcoming; Worrell 2006; see the "References" section for a list of several forthcoming publications directly related to the labor study).

6. By ignoring the South it is impossible to test claims such as those advanced contemporaneously by Reddick ([1943] 1999: 450) that Black antisemitism was exclusively an urban and Northern phenomena: The question of sample representativeness was certainly an issue and one that the Institute acknowledged. They concluded that, given their task of determining the level of anti-Semitism within wartime industries, their sample was adequately drawn and representative of American labor. That was not entirely true and slightly veiled their true intent. The sample was heavy on CIO workers because it was felt that the CIO represented the vanguard of labor anti-fascism. They wanted to know if the ostensibly left-leaning elements of labor would be able to repulse fascism on the domestic front. To some extent, the American labor study was an extension and refinement of their work on the Weimar proletariat during the 30s (Fromm 1984).

7. "In the American context, the most ironical thing about Negro anti-Semitism is that the Negro is really condemning the Jew for having become an American white man – for having become, in effect, a Christian. The Jew profits from his status in America, and he must expect Negroes to distrust him for it. The Jew does not realize that the credential he offers, the fact that he has been despised and slaughtered, does not increase the Negro's understanding. It increases the Negro's rage... [The Jew] is singled out by Negroes not because he acts differently from other white men, but because he doesn't" (Baldwin [1967] 1969: 9, 11).

8. Beginning in the late 1950s, there was, as Wilson and Aponte put it, a "rediscovery of poverty" and a raft of social policy programs were initiated including the Kerrs-Mills Act (1959) that redressed old-age health care; the 1961 food stamp pilot program; 1962 Manpower Development and Training Act and various other programs initiated by the Kennedy and Johnson administrations (1985: 233-34).

9. Monthly Labor Review, June 2004. "Blacks, Asians, and Hispanics in the Civilian Labor Force."

10. Monthly Labor Review, June 2004. "Blacks, Asians, and Hispanics in the Civilian Labor Force."

11. Graham Cassano's work is especially relevant here: "During the Cold War period, overt Jim Crow racism declined in the United States even as new 'ethnic' groups were included under the broad rubric of whiteness. On the surface this may seem like progress toward an ever more inclusive pluralistic and multi-cultural community. But this multi-cultural community was bound together by an American nationalism that depended upon a racialized imperial policy" (2006).

12. What was lacking in the past was, on the one hand, demonization and, on the other, relative exclusion from criticism on the part of the Black press. "While disparaging remarks about white immigrants ran though the speeches and writing of black Americans throughout the century, blacks were usually careful to exclude Jews from these attacks.... Jews alone among whites in America, whether native-born or immigrants, were viewed as sharing with black people the status of second-class citizenship" (Foner 1975:359-60).

13. On the distinction between "ethnoracial assignment" and "ethnoracial identity" see Brodkin (1998: 3).

14. "This is not to say that anti-Semitism disappeared after World War II, only that it fell from fashion and was driven underground" (Brodkin 1998: 36-37; on the importance of anti-fascism and the reinterpretation of anti-Semitism see also Roediger 2005: 25; Sollors 1996).

15. For a review of the literature dealing with Black nationalism see Davis and Brown (2002). For nationalist anti-Semitism see Marx (1967).

16. Anti-Semitism represents a kind of distorted realism toward social facts. "If we attempt to formulate in abstract terms the principle to which the anti-Semite appeals, it would come to this: A whole is more and other than the sum of its parts .... [T]he anti-Semite has chosen to fall back on the spirit of synthesis in order to understand the world" ([1948] 1976: 34). We should amend Sartre, here, by saying that the whole is not only greater than the sum of its parts but also qualitatively different as well.

17. The contradictory nature of anti-Semitism "is perhaps better understood if [historical] anti-Semitism is regarded as a complex myth, whose function, like that of other myths, was precisely to contain and express contradiction, to map out the social universe in terms of polarities, such as Money versus Honour, Stock Exchange versus Land, Gold versus Blood, Jew

versus Christian or Aryan. In this way, it expressed the experience, the cultural dilemmas of those living in a society whose traditional structures and values were being altered by the process of modernization with unprecedented rapidity" (Wilson 1982: 639). Of course, myths are attempts to explain and/or legitimate the present with distorted historical elements as well as outright fabrications.

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On Werner Herzog's Documentary *Grizzly Man*: Psychoanalysis, Nature, and Meaning

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Introduction

Few documentaries in recent years have received as much acclaim as Werner Herzog's film Grizzly Man (2005), a narrative exploration of the life and death of amateur grizzly bear expert and wildlife preservationist Timothy Treadwell, who supposedly lived unarmed among grizzlies for 13 summers before being eaten alive by one. It won the Alfred P. Sloan award at the 2005 Sundance Film Festival and was awarded Best Feature Documentary at the Mountain Film in Telluride Festival. Ebert and Roper have given it "two thumbs way up" and J. Hoberman of The New York Times has called it "one of the most remarkable documentaries produced by any filmmaker in recent years." However, like many of Herzog's previous films, it has also generated a certain uneasiness and even minor controversy, as reflected in several online reviews. One critic, commenting on the "myth of objectivity" which surrounds the genre of documentary, prefaced his review by noting that it was personal movie making rather than "the typical PBS/Discovery Channel sort of informational objectivity."[2] Another commented that he had mixed feelings and was left with the impression of opportunism rather than inspiration on Herzog's part and felt "somewhat manipulated."[3] Herzog's filmmaking has always been controversial (Bachman 1977; Gitlin 1983; Cronin 2002; Prager 2007), but the subject matter of this particular feature may well stir more interest among members of the American public than his past films.

My own interest in Grizzly Man as subject matter is largely cultural, as this contributes so heavily to the perspectives by which we interpret a myriad of phenomena. Herzog being a German director narrating the life of Timothy Treadwell—whose personage is unmistakably the goofy American surfer dude—means a German-American transatlantic interchange in the form of a cultural production which lies somewhere between cinematic art and a sort of public discussion of an intellectual bent.[4] Given that within the history of the German tradition so many of its artists have lived outside of Germany, the fact that Herzog has lived in California for many years does not alter the fact that he was born and raised in Bavaria and more importantly, that his background is rooted in the German tradition. Thus, the reason he offers for his interest in Treadwell as subject matter—that he himself had filmed in the wilderness of jungles—does not suffice. Were it not for his given name and accent, for certainly his proficiency in English must be commended, the viewers might assume his background to be all-American. However, it is unimaginable that the German literary, painting, and intellectual tradition did not play a large role in forming his perspective toward Treadwell (Cronin 2002:136-137, 140; Prager 2007:3-5, 76-81). His deemphasizing his ties to the German tradition in Grizzly Man is understandable to a certain extent. Americans have always tended to be suspicious of European complexes of superiority; given that part of history's burden entails the complex relationship between the social function of artistic traditions and varieties of nationalistic sentiment, this was perhaps prudent. Many American viewers, however, are exposed to certain elements of the aforementioned German tradition filtered through Herzog's narration, when, as I will argue here, perhaps Herzog might have done better to learn from American pragmatism in order to gain a more balanced perspective and also from European and American scholars

who have been formed in the European Continental Tradition.

Cultural perspectives influence psychoanalysis, nature, and meaning quite decisively. First, any narrative on the Treadwell story—including that co-written by Treadwell himself—or here, commentary thereto, is going to necessarily carry some psychoanalytic value. There are many different angles by which to view persons in a given situation, as they play the roles of the analyst and the analysand, the terms and conditions of the act of analysis itself, and the social context in which such analysis takes place, or to enunciate this last issue more precisely, the certain matrices of social (and to that extent, historical) power with which psychoanalysis remains inexorably enmeshed. Next, there is the matter of environmentalism and the many debates which have taken place within environmental studies, such as the extent to which external nature is a type of anthropomorphism, or as such, subjectively constructed. Then there is the question of meaning, to which the documentary as a narrative act is quite central, and of whether meaningful narration can proceed in the absence of dialectical reflection upon the situation. These three elements, perhaps rarely discussed in such a way as to aim at any sort of synthesis, converge in Grizzly Man. As will be demonstrated in the space below, Herzog's background and knowledge of the German tradition informs his method of analyzing Treadwell and in certain respects accounts for its inadequacy, as he remains confined by a paradigm of thought originating in German classicism which endeavors to "superegoize" the analysand rather than to explore possibilities of experience. The conception of nature which Herzog posits seems to have been conceived during his earlier years in reaction to natural sentimentalists; however, it is extreme, and its consequences seem not to have been critically thought through. In the first part of this essay, I will attempt to summarize Grizzly Man, for the purposes of the discussion outlined above, with an emphasis on Herzog's introduction. This summary will then serve as a sort of "backdrop" against which to discuss Herzog's use of psychoanalysis, his theory of nature, and his sense of meaning.

1. Herzog's Introduction of Timothy Treadwell

Since Herzog's films are written to resemble dreams (Cronin 2002:65), it is difficult to mark exactly where the introduction ends and the film proper begins. I consider the first three of the film's 27 chapters as providing pertinent information for the understanding of the story, and the next two chapters thereafter as part of the film's commencement. The opening is set in the wilds of Alaska, with Treadwell, wearing an exaggeratedly large black jacket and sunglasses in front of the camera, squatting, in front of two large bears. While his proximity to them is not terrifyingly close, neither does his lack of distance convey any sense of carefree relaxation. In the case that some readers have not yet seen the film and may therefore require some direct citation in order to gain some preliminary understanding of the star of the documentary, I will quote Treadwell at length as he gives a synopsis of his situation:

> I'm out in the prime cut of the big green. Behind me is Ed and Rowdy, members of an up-and-coming subadult gang. They're challenging everything, even me. Goes with the territory. (On the screen appears "Timothy Treadwell, 1957-2003.") If I show weakness, if I retreat, I may be hurt, I may be killed [...] For once there is weakness, they will exploit it, they will take me out, they will decapitate me, they will chop me into bits and pieces. I'm dead. But so far, I persevere, persevere. Most times I'm a kind warrior out here [...] No one ever friggin' knew, that there are times when my life is on the precipice of death, and that these bears can bite, they can kill. And if I am weak, I go down. I love them with all my heart, I will protect them. I will die for them, but I will not die at their claws and paws. I will fight, I will be strong, I will be one of them. I will be ... the master. But still a kind warrior. (He kisses his palms, then raises and opens them in the air.) I love you Rowdy. Give it to me baby. That's what I'm talking about (he repeats this last sentence twice). I can smell death all over my fingers (Herzog 2005).

Thereafter, various shots of bears roaming around a large plain are shown and the sound is filled with rugged-sounding music from an electric guitar, rife with string-bending and feedback with medium distortion. I'll likewise cite Herzog at length, as he makes his first statement, and introduces himself:

> All these majestic creatures were filmed by Timothy Treadwell who lived among wild grizzlies for 13 summers. He went to remote areas of the Alaskan peninsula believing that he was needed there to protect these animals and educate the public. During his last five years out there, he took along a video camera and shot over 100 hours of footage. What Treadwell intended was to show these bears in their natural habitat. Having myself filmed in the wilderness of jungles I found that beyond the wildlife film, in his material lay dormant a story of astonishing beauty and depth. I discovered a film of human ecstasies and darkest inner turmoil. As if there was a desire in him to leave the confines of his humanness and bond with the bears, Treadwell reached out, seeking a primordial encounter. But in doing so, he crossed an invisible borderline (Herzog 2005).

He follows this by showing more scenes shot by Treadwell, this time of him coming within much closer proximity of the bears, so close, that he has physical contact with them. He shows one particular bear standing on two legs, scratching his back against tree limbs. After the bear leaves, Treadwell approaches the tree. Although Treadwell wears sunglasses, the viewers have no difficulty perceiving his amazement with what he has witnessed. He modulates his voice in such a way as to sound ridiculous, exclaiming, "He's a big bear!" over and over again. Herzog then discusses Treadwell's excitement and how well this connected him with children against a backdrop of photographs and drawings, presumably from some of the children he'd visited. In hopes to create awareness, Herzog relates, Treadwell talked to thousands of school children, many of whom would later recall his "fabulous storytelling" as one of the most memorable events of their school years. Additionally, he took his mission so seriously that he never solicited for a fee. "Over time," relates Herzog, "he reached the status of a national celebrity." Herzog then shows a clip from an interview with Keith Morrison, which aired on Dateline NBC, "Timothy Treadwell is crazy about bears. How crazy?"[5] Herzog goes on to claim, "It was as if he'd become a star by virtue of his own invention." Just past the third chapter, Herzog provides more information about the story, such as that his girlfriend, Amie Hugenard, died by his side. Herzog also shows aerial footage of the wilderness scene where much of the Herzog's story of Treadwell takes place, Katmai National Park, Alaska. He goes on to include a statement rather pertinent to the viewer's understanding of the plot. "Treadwell saw himself as the guardian of this land and stylized himself as Prince Valiant, fighting the bad guys with their schemes to do harm to the bears. But all this land is a federally protected reserve" (Herzog 2005).

2. Reconstructing Treadwell: Interviews and Inner Being

A good nature program, Mike Lapinski has noted (2005:15), requires the following ingredients: a charismatic lead character, an interesting story, and beautiful scenery with wildlife. Herzog has all of these and he goes back and forth between the Alaskan wilderness and interviews with those who knew Treadwell in locations as far away as California and Florida, as he seems to piece the mystery together. Here I will cite some of the information Herzog was able to collect as I summarize the story. One of Herzog's first interviewees, Sam Egli, worked on removing Treadwell and Hugenard's remains, which, as he testifies, amounted to four large garbage bags. Treadwell, he says, probably meant well and in a way tried to help the resource of the bears. "But to me he was acting like he was working with people wearing bear costumes instead of wild animals … He got what he deserved, in my opinion." He supposes that the only reason why he lasted as long as he did was because the bears may have considered him afflicted, "like he was mentally retarded or something" (Herzog 2005). To him, it looked as though Treadwell believed that the bears looked frightening, but were harmless creatures, which he could approach, pet, sing to, and bond with, like they were "children of the universe or some odd [sic]."[6] Brad Prager, also citing this interview (2007:86), contends that although this may seem cruel, Egli is hardly alone in thinking this way. Herzog then interviews a couple who knew Treadwell, Marc and Marie Gaede. Marie quotes from one of the last letters she received from Treadwell, in which he declared the exigency of his mutating into a bear to handle the life he led. She explains how this is a religious experience. Marc reads from one of many vitriolic letters he has received, demonstrating the resonance that Treadwell and his activities carried into the realm of the political: "A bear diet consists of liberals and dems and wacko environmentalists that think that the spotted owl is the most important thing in the world. We need to somehow drastically increase the number of bears in America, especially in such key spots as the Berkeley campus" (Herzog 2005).

Larry Van Daele, a bear biologist, discusses the manner in which Treadwell wanted to become a bear. He notes having spoken with those who had encountered him in the field, and watched him act like a bear, "woof(ing)" at them, and acting in the same way that a bear would upon being surprised. Van Daele chooses not to suppose the reason for Treadwell's behavior; he offers a conjecture, however, asserting that upon spending days in the field with the bears, a certain siren song comes calling, which can induce one to want to spend more time in their simpler world. He then draws a distinction between illusion and reality, which Herzog will grasp as being central to the situation, the former being that it seems to be a wonderful world, and the latter being that the world of the bears is actually quite harsh, and that humans can never enter that world for being different.

Herzog defends Treadwell not as an ecologist, but rather as a film maker. He notes how methodical Treadwell is, taking some shots up to fifteen times, and shows examples of this. Still, during a scene in which Treadwell has

been filming himself and has left the camera for a moment, Herzog comments on the shot of bare nature, the wind blowing the brush, lamenting that in all of Treadwell's excitement, he seems not aware of the beauty that nature can have, should one slow down and take the time to admire it. Herzog then explores Treadwell's soul, based, of course on Treadwell's own speech before the camera, which, he explains, "…was his instrument to explore the wilderness around him, but increasingly it became something more. He started to scrutinize his innermost being, his demons, his exhilarations. Facing the lens of a camera took on the quality of a confessional" (Herzog 2005).

In one scene, Treadwell seems to aver his agnosticism, but argues that if there's a God, then God would be very pleased with him. Then he supposes how it would be, if God could watch how much he loves, adores, and respects the animals, and how he is "one of them." Moreover, he aggrandizes himself before a supposed almighty, in regard to the altruism of his traveling around the world to show his research for no charge. Of this work he says, "I feel good about myself doing it. And I want to continue, I really hope I can. But if not, be warned. I will die for these animals." He repeats this last sentence twice. "Thank you so much for giving me these animals, for giving me a life. I had no life. Now I have a life." Next, Herzog shows a clip in which Treadwell, simultaneously walking and filming himself, discusses his failed relationships with women. Treadwell seems perplexed by his failure to build lasting relationships, given his nice personality. "I'm fun," he claims, "I'm very, very good in the—You're not supposed to say that when you're a guy. But I know I am. They know I am. And… I don't fight with them, I'm so passive. Bit of a patsy!" He asks himself whether this is a turnoff to girls. Admitting that he is not a "total great guy," he nonetheless asserts that he has a "good life going." For awhile he laments the fact that he is not gay, going into graphic detail about what he presumes gay life entails, but then returns to how he loves girls, who, he adds, need a lot more care and finesse, which he says he likes "a bit." He then attempts to discuss the experience of "when it goes bad and you're alone," but cuts himself short. Presumably, his mind is too weak for a deep self-analysis, and the viewers learn that his lamentation over not being gay derives from his belief that rebounding is much more difficult for heterosexuals. Nonetheless, he offers a disclaimer, that he is sure that gay people have problems as well, but just not as much as "one goofy straight guy named Timothy Treadwell" (Herzog 2005).[7]

Following this, Treadwell is shown lying on the ground, propping himself up on one elbow and speaking to a fox, which he has named "Iris." He asks the fox how he came into this work, that is, whether or not the fox had ever heard the story. He confirms that he was troubled, and that he drank. He intimates that the fox wouldn't know what that is. He tells of how experience with alcohol addiction reached a point where he would either die or break free of it. After programs could not help him, he discovered "this land of bears." He then realized that they were in peril, and that they needed a caretaker, but not a "person messed up." He continues, "So I promised that if I would look over them, would they please help me to become a better person and they've become so inspirational … I gave up the drinking. It was a miracle." This is not the last time in which he refers to certain events in terms of the miraculous. Then, from high altitudes Herzog shows footage of a region of the glacier, saying:

> **In his diaries, Treadwell often speaks of the human world as something foreign. He made a clear distinction between the bears and the people's world which moved further and further into the distance. Wild, primordial nature was where he felt truly at home. We explored the glacier of the back country in the Grizzly Sanctuary. The gigantic complexity of tumbling ice and abysses separated Treadwell from the world out there. And more so, it seems to me that this landscape in turmoil is a metaphor for his soul (Herzog 2005).[8]**

To find why Treadwell went into the wild, Herzog visits the former's parents, Val and Carol Dexter. He explains to the viewers of Treadwell's childhood in Long Island, where his father worked as the foreman of a construction team for a telephone company. "There must have been an urge to escape the safety of his protected environment." He learns that nothing in Treadwell's childhood pointed to anything extraordinary and that he was a good kid, not an "A" student, a "B" student, and that he got along well with kids and animals. As a child, he had a pet squirrel, named Willie, and developed into an all-American boy. His parents tell of him going off to Bradley University on an athletic scholarship, drinking, hanging out with the wrong crowd, injuring himself, thus losing his scholarship, and coming back home. He wanted a new start, so he went out to California when he was 19 or 20. He got a job, hired an agent, and changed his name to Treadwell (a family name), attempting to be theatrical. He had been on Love Connection, and allegedly, he came in second to Woody Harrelson trying out for the bartender on Cheers, and thereafter he spiraled down. Herzog then questions a friend in California, which brings the viewer more information on Treadwell's cycle of drugs, epiphanies, and the need to create a new persona for himself, sometimes fabricating wild stories. He interviews former co-worker and girlfriend Jewel Palovak, who discusses how troubled he was, including his highs and lows, confirming that he certainly had a dark side. "He was mixed up in drugs, which makes

you mixed up in bad people, people with guns. Timothy always had a sense of justice that was his own." When Herzog asks her how dangerous, she tells a story of their going to the Van Nuys courthouse to watch people being sentenced, but she believes that he did so to remind himself what his life would be like if he went to that dark place (Herzog 2005).

Herzog then flashes to Alaska, where Treadwell stands before a camera, mawkishly repeating, "I'm in love with my animal friends." In another scene he handles some feces from a bear he had named "Wendy," ecstatic that it is still warm. Treadwell asserts that everything about them is perfect. At first using free-indirect style, Herzog narrates: "Perfection belonged to the bears. But once in a while, Treadwell came face-to-face with the harsh reality of wild nature. This did not fit into his sentimentalized view that everything out there was good and the universe in balance and harmony." Herzog then explains why male bears sometimes kill cubs—to fornicate with the mother—and shows a shot of a young bear's forearm and paw, with Treadwell's hands holding the paw. Then he shows another scene, this time of Treadwell sitting next to a carcass of a young fox. "I love you and I don't understand. It's a painful world." Herzog counters with his conception of nature: "Here I differ with Treadwell. He seemed to ignore the fact that in nature there are predators. I believe the common denominator of the universe is not harmony, but chaos, hostility and murder" (Herzog 2005).

Herzog represents Treadwell's paranoia quite well. He presents one instance where some tourists throw rocks at one of Treadwell's friends (a bear), and points out that for all Treadwell's vehement rhetoric against poaching, this is the most damage to the bears that he has been able to film. In one instance, Treadwell, finds a rock on which, presumably, tourists have left him a note that reads, "Hi Timothy, see you in summer 2001." Treadwell sees this as a warning, as "some sort of a haha." When it appears that someone has drawn a "smiley face" on a rock near his camp site, he also considers it "Freddy Krueger creepy." Herzog relates that there were visitors now and then, but emphasizes that for Treadwell there were just intruders, an "encroaching threat upon what he considered his Eden." In a chapter titled "Park Rant," Herzog shows Treadwell at the end of his 2001 expedition, during which he had violated Katmai National Park rules by not moving his camp site often enough and by not maintaining enough distance from the bears. Building up a rage which the director describes as "almost incandescent, artistic," Treadwell rebukes the Park Service and boasts of his having protected the bears, despite the fact that the government (here he means Park Service) has flown over twice in two months. Repeating himself for effect, he asks how they dare challenge him and smear him with their campaigns. "I will continue to do this," he vows. "I will fight them. I will be an American dissident if need be. There's a patriotic time going on right now, but as far as this (expletive) government's concerned … (more expletives). Lowering the sound of the eco-warrior's voice, Herzog explains, "Now Treadwell crosses a line with the park service which we will not cross. He attacks the individuals with whom he worked for 13 years." Herzog continues:

> It is clear to me that the Park Service is not Treadwell's real enemy. There's a larger and more implacable adversary out there, the people's world and civilization ... The actor in his film has taken over from the film maker. I have seen this madness before on a film set.[9] But Treadwell is not an actor in opposition to a director or producer. He's fighting civilization itself. It is the same civilization that cast Thoreau out of Walden and John Muir into the wild (Herzog 2005).

After showing those closest to Treadwell scattering his ashes near Hallo Bay, Alaska, bringing some amount of closure to the pain of their loss, Herzog finally draws the documentary to a close, but not before visiting the location of Treadwell's death. Reviewing footage shot right before his death, he zooms in on one bear's face, commenting that what haunts him is that in all the bears Treadwell has filmed, "I discover no kinship, no understanding, no mercy. I see only the overwhelming indifference of nature." He avers that for him no such secret world of the bears exists. Closing, Herzog shows footage of bears running, footage that is partially obscured by both distance and fog. He discusses how the argument as to how wrong or right Treadwell was "disappears into a distance into a fog." It is his footage that remains, he contends, "And as we watch these animals in their joys of being, a thought becomes more and more clear. That it is not so much a look at wild nature as it is an insight into ourselves, our nature. And that for me, beyond his mission, gives meaning to his life and to his death" (Herzog 2005).

2.1 The German Tradition: Experience, Psychoanalysis, Animals

The sort of psychoanalysis I discuss here may require some explanatory remarks. One rather laudable aspect of Herzog's representation of Treadwell's psychic being is that the Bavarian director never interviews such would-be authorities as psychologists or psychiatrists to assign Treadwell a certain congenital condition or render otherwise "essentialist" interpretations. In fact, while Herzog sees Treadwell as troubled, he remains unconvinced that Treadwell

was insane.[10]

Rather than referring to any sort of neuropathic dysfunction, he very often refers to Treadwell's "soul" and battling his demons. It is important to remember that German uses one word, Geist, for what in English might be alternately termed soul, spirit, or mind. Thus, Herzog's conception of the psyche is much more anthropomorphic, such as the original Greek term suggested, being bound up with the idea of human consciousness, which is also how Sigmund Freud considered the psyche and defined his work against American behaviorism (Freud [1940] 1969:28n). Long before Freud, however, the German literary tradition had been experimenting with core concepts of psychoanalysis since the era of Goethe, considered within German studies the age of classicism. Admirers and critics of Freud have noted that Goethe did have an immense impact upon the former (Gay 1988:128, 366, Deleuze and Guattari [1972] 1983: 55, 118). Given that psychoanalysis in the German tradition was born out of the literary narrative, for Herzog to play the role as analyst is nothing extraordinary.

Now, there are two very important aspects to consider when examining Timothy Treadwell: first, as a college dropout, he endeavors to become a bear expert, conducting field "research" (Herzog 2005, Treadwell and Palovak 1997) and wishes desperately to gain the respect of the scientific community (Lapinski 2005:21-22); and second, he seeks to escape his prior social positioning by an attempt to journey into "the secret world of the bears." He believes that his having "the heart of a wild animal" (Treadwell and Palovak 1997:1) can compensate for his lack of education and training (Bildung). To Herzog, the problems with this must be immediately recognizable: ever since Goethe, subsequent writers have had to confront a certain mindset, which privileges the notion that one should know one's place in respect to the general order of society, and ought not ethereally venture to experience beyond that, especially when one is presented with an opportunity to take a short cut in order to arrive at a higher station. He argued that "everything that liberates our mind without at the same time imparting self-control is pernicious" and lamented that "there are many people who imagine that what they experience they also understand" (Goethe 1998:67,117).

Thoughts such as these were the driving force behind the moral lesson of his poem The Sorcerer's Apprentice (Der Zauberlehrling), the story of the young apprentice upon which Mickey Mouse's character in the Disney cartoon film Fantasia is based. Here, the apprentice's desire to command the broomsticks to move according to his own will leads him to attempt to cast a spell as a means to that end, despite the fact that his master has admonished him not to do so. When he cannot remember the last line of his verbal formula, events take an unexpected and chaotic turn, eventually forcing him to concede the recklessness of his actions.

These views also contribute to the moral lesson of Faust I, the story of the alchemist and doctor whose aspirations to become godlike lead him to dabble in magic, and whose desire to experience that ethereal sphere beyond the ordinariness of human existence, leads him to the near destruction of a young woman with whom he falls in love. The German critic Erich Trunz has argued that in Faust lies a certain longing (Sehnsucht) to reach over the boundaries of his ego, and this longing rushes him to reach out of his element, mixing up that which is high and that which is low, entangling him increasingly deeper into the underworld (1998:483). However, Faust's antagonist Mephistopheles, a figure kin to the devil, first appears to him in the form of a black dog, running around, out of control. For Goethe self-control in social relations was so essential to being human rather than animal (151) that he could, as the German critic Hans Mayer has pointed out ([1946] 1974:271), be quite hard and merciless toward those who lacked this quality, as he was to his one-time friend Jakob R. M. Lenz, after the latter had fallen mad, full of whimsical behavior and mistrust, desiring to experience beyond what he was able to understand. An admirer of Anaxagoras' teaching that animals have active but not passive reason, which serves as the interpreter of understanding (151), Goethe seems to have recognized Lenz' loss of this reason and seems to have been either incapable of or unwilling to help him regain his humanity.

Georg Büchner would somewhat sympathetically explore Jakob R. M. Lenz in his novella based on the man's decline. Interviewed by Paul Cronin (2002:137), Herzog names Büchner among authors whose works he "can only speak of in awe" and once used an adapted version of Büchner's play Woyzeck for his 1976 eponymous film starring Klaus Kinski (Herzog [1976] 2000).[11] More recently however, it has been pointed out that this period for Herzog was fleeting; soon thereafter the film director came to "distance himself from most shared ground with traditional leftist ideas" (Prager 2007:78). Büchner's literature reflects his own struggle for political freedom during the 1830s (Mayer [1946] 1974), before the terms "left" and "right" became such a part of the political nomenclature, but he is highly regarded in progressive circles. However, it is the figure of Lenz which facilitates an analysis of Treadwell, although, it has been shown that Woyzeck and Lenz seem quite similar in their relative social powerlessness (Larsen 1988). Although short passages provide rather quaint impressions, the following citations show some similarity between Büchner's Lenz and Treadwell:

> ...Lenz went through the mountains. The peaks and high slopes in snows, gray rocks down into the valleys, green fields, boulders and pine trees. It was cold and damp, water trickled down the rocks and sprang over the path. Pine branches hung down heavily into the moist air. Gray clouds moved across the sky ... pain tore through his chest, he stood, panting, his body bent forward, eyes and mouth wide open, contain all within him, he stretched out and lay over the earth, he burrowed into the cosmos, it was the pleasure that hurt him (Büchner 1986:139-140).

> The rush of the face-to-face encounter (with "Mr. Chocolate" bear) lifted me into a euphoric state. I practically flew back to my campsite, dancing a jig and throwing my arms into the air. When I arrived at the raging river, another transformation occurred. I no longer feared the rapids. The river still warranted my caution and respect, but not my cowardice. Summoning the power of the grizzly within me, I dove in and paddled vigorously across, snarling and growling the whole way. I was wild and free (Treadwell and Palovak 1997:29).

Lenz is a character whose ego and reality-consciousness are lost, whose tendencies toward the schizophrenic eventually become rather strikingly manifest (Wittkowski 1978:344; Jancke 1979:242-245). Lenz obtains his joy in life from traversing the natural landscape, but this bonding with nature comes at the cost of remaining alienated from the normal world of human relations. He cannot be persuaded to return to his family, averring that without being able to enjoy nature, he would go mad. But while Lenz relishes in being one with nature while impervious to normal human relations, to bond with or otherwise "become" a certain species of animal never occurs to him.

The desire to experience the perspective of the animal is more apparent by late nineteenth century. One memorable essay by Nietzsche extols the virtues of animals: "Consider the herd grazing before you. These animals leap about, eat, rest, digest, and leap again; and so from morning to night and day to day, only briefly concerned for their pleasure and displeasure, enthralled by the moment…" ([1874] 1993:8). Nietzsche notes the contradiction of man's pride in being human rather than animal, and man's envy at the happiness of the animal.[12] But it should be made clear that Nietzsche comes to understand that the aspiration toward animal instincts should not signify escapism or weakness; rather, that these are bound up with the will to power (1913:110). Recently, Monika Maron, an East German author, offers a more in-depth picture of the desire to experience being animal, in her Silent Close No. 6 (Stille Zeile Sechs).[13] Her anti-heroine, Rosalind Polkowski, is a discontented journalist who is hired by a retired Communist Party leader, Herbert Beerenbaum, as an amanuensis, to record his memoirs. Her moral consciousness has problems with the idea. She is tactile, capable of feeling vibrations of the old man's angry body as these penetrate her flesh down to her heart (Maron 1993:12-13). She also tends to blend the concrete and the abstract, considering both "freedom" and "a human being" to be a "place" and believes that "we all have to be plant, animal, and human" but she finds it difficult to decide on the order (66, 70). In one scene near the beginning of the story, she takes pity on a neighborhood cat and decides to give the cat the sausages that she had been saving for her dinner (15). At another point she asks Beerenbaum whether he really believes that generations of people would be born so that Communists can test their ideals on them, and she avers that her ideal "is to be a cat, as they are not subject to Communists or anyone else" (135).

Despite their shared idealization of being animal—a notion at which humanists of all sorts bristle—there is one very important difference between the figures of Rosalind Polkowski and Timothy Treadwell. Rosalind has been able to rather solidly connect her ideal of being an animal to the fact of her living in an oppressive, male-dominated, single-party sociopolitical order. She is painfully aware that she enjoys no means by which to assert her voice and is therefore excluded from the political process. But whereas Rosalind kept company with those whose views were out of sync with the Party line, Treadwell does not seem to have associated with serious political dissidents. And while, as we have seen, he claims that as a child he had the heart of a wild animal, he might have come into contact with people who could have helped him understand himself in terms of the social and also channel his energies in a positive direction, had American middle class society been able to witness real improvements in their social system. Those who most daringly ventured toward such change, however, were either assassinated, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., John F. and Robert Kennedy, or were otherwise marginalized, while the war in Vietnam, an influx of drugs, and subtler means of ethnic/racial bigotry served to distract from such ideals, creating instead a general climate of chaos, instability and fear. Less than ten years after two of the aforementioned assassinations, which occurred during Treadwell's preadolescence, the nation's elite began testing many of the policies that would later become the staples of Reaganomics on the City of New York (Harvey 2005:46-51). Rarely can suburbia insulate itself from the problems associated with an abused and demoralized working class in the inner city, and one can assume that as a youth, Treadwell must have been indirectly affected. In his research, Mike Lapinski interviewed a fellow diver at Bradley, who recalled Treadwell as "always ready to fight…" (Lapinski 2005:92).

One of the most problematic aspects of Herzog's narration is that only once does he come close to inquiring

into Treadwell's lived experiences, particularly violent ones, which for most people would be rather traumatizing and which are symptomatic of so many communities in New York, southern California, and many other regions. The introduction to Treadwell's biographical writing is revealing: "I landed in Long Beach, California, an overactive street punk without any skills, prospects, or hopes. What little assets and attributes I possessed were quickly devoured by a voracious drinking problem. Alcohol soon gave way to drugs" (Treadwell and Palovak 1997:2-3). He then tells of a downward turn: "I medicated myself with lines of cocaine, buckets of booze, and sprinkled in the new thrills of crystal meth and Quaaludes. Incidents of madness and danger occurred with frightening frequency." He then goes on to tell a story of an altercation one night with a drug dealer named Turk, which started when Turk accused Treadwell of being a "maggot hanger-on type" and made other demeaning statements:

> I kicked my tennis shoe into Turk's smug face, knocking him backward into an expensive antique hutch. Fine china avalanched to the ground, some cracking over Turk's bloody mug. The other three dope dealers lit into me. None of them was much bigger than me, but they were tougher than nails. They punched and slapped me, then flung me headfirst into a wall. Curiously, my head went through the wall, and I was suddenly gazing into the kitchen. Dazed, I looked around, momentarily awed by the shiny, well-appointed room. Meanwhile, the dopers were still in the dining room, with the rest of my body, kicking and striking me... Growling, I extricated my torso, and began spinning around like a top (Treadwell and Palovak 1997:3).

This is fabulous story-telling, embellished with imagery that may invoke episodes of The Three Stooges and animated cartoons. While Herzog discusses the content of Treadwell's diaries for factual information, he ignores Treadwell's book, and foregoes any deep investigation into the sources of trauma in Treadwell's lived experience, meanwhile demonstrating that Treadwell often fabricated stories. Nonetheless, I would not condone simply dismissing Treadwell's narration on the basis that neurotics fabricate, tempting though it may be. However easily one imagines Treadwell as a "hanger-on type"—he was quite honest about this—he does seem to be emotionally scarred by violence, even if he is not connecting that violence to a historicized socio-political order (see Giddens 1994:229-236). But being marked by human to human violence is merely one part of what motivated the eco-warrior.

One interesting aspect of Treadwell's character that I have been able to discern, more from his footage of himself rather than from his book, is that he often employs grammatical structures which hardly make sense; his thoughts take flight abruptly through unrelated topics. He rambles, repeating sentences as monologue fillers, I believe, when he is not sure what to say or how he wants to communicate next. And yet, he is half-aware of the splits in his thought-processes and his awkwardness with language, which I think is part of why he shoots some takes up to fifteen times, and why he often corrects his word choice while in mid-sentence.

Aside from his camera, I believe he feels very much under the lens, of the scientific and park community, as well as of the public. Such a complex character as Treadwell who has lived in New York and southern California during late capitalism—certainly not the same civilization as 19th century America—deserves more comprehensive analysis. For this I will use the schizoanalysis offered by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, mainly because it posits the awareness that people are inevitably part of and dependent upon nature and that as a method of analyzing the schizophrenic (from figures such as Lenz to Americans such as Jack Kerouac), this method tends to merge psychoanalysis with what C. Wright Mills referred to as the "Sociological Imagination" ([1959] 2000) by way of the politicization of desire, a concept which Fredric Jameson has traced back to the philosophical work of that other great figure of German classicism, Friedrich Schiller (Jameson 1971:83-106). Treadwell is plagued by the manic-depression and paranoia of the subject who would be the product of what Deleuze and Guattari have termed "the despotic machine" ([1972] 1983:33), a remnant of an earlier historical epoch. Additionally, his ego has been shattered; his torn and twisted mind appears to represent various modes of social control (for Deleuze and Guattari, "territorialization") in seemingly kaleidoscopic formation, and at the same time the desire to break free from them (or "deterritorialization"). According to their analysis, some paranoid or repressed individuals go through a process in which they attempt to unscramble the codes of modernity, in order to become revolutionary, and it is at this point that paranoia and schizophrenia are able to be separated. Not all achieve such a breakthrough, however, without first suffering a breakdown (278). One possible point of inquiry might be why people such as Treadwell come to empathize with animals more than with the sufferings of politically manipulated people, and whether they unconsciously perceive animals as metaphors for such people. In one scene in his book, Treadwell records his hearing of a story in which "federal people" from Washington, D. C., who were petrified of bears, left Katmai National Park early. He conjectures that Katmai is much safer than Washington, D.C. (1997:76). What becomes apparent is that some bureaucrats need not concern themselves with what is animalistic to gain an understanding of how the

will to power operates in society; meanwhile, some people voluntarily forfeit their status as political animals (in the Aristotelian sense) by trying to empathize with animals/nature, and remain politically powerless.

2.2 Subjectivity and Indifference in Nature

Before writing of Goethe's conception of nature and subjectivity two clarifications are in order. The first is that I am referring to the man's mature views. Of course, there was one incident in his youth, when, after a skirmish with death, he reacted to the sentimentalists of his own time, positing nature as "indifferent to human sufferings or sentiments" (Boyle 1991:128-129). After Goethe seriously took up the study of nature, he came to believe it to be of paramount importance that nature should draw men to the sublime, and that men of science must maintain a sense of awe in regard to the natural world. He believed that scientific knowledge "helps us mainly because it helps the wonder by which we are called to nature rather more intelligible…"(Goethe 1998:51). The second clarification admits that it is difficult to respect nature by believing it to be irrevocably subjective, and Goethe rejected this idea (Naydler 1996:91). Instead, he considered experiments as "inquiries into nature" (Magnus [1906] 1949:227). But he also realized a considerable barrier between man's ability to understand and the secrets which nature possessed of her internal order. As Goethe wrote in 1798: "…Nature understands no jesting; she is always true, always serious, always severe; she is always right, and the errors and faults are always those of the human being. The person incapable of appreciating her she despises, and only to the apt, the pure, and the true, does she resign herself, and reveal her secrets" (quoted in Naydler 1996:109). At the same time, he was able to see that much of what scientists might say about nature may reflect more about the scientists as people than about nature itself. Thus, while he conducted scientific study, he classified the different modes of contemplating nature, the lowest level consisting of the exploiters, or those who seek to use what nature offers for their own practical purposes (Magnus [1906] 1949:228-229).

Although Goethe's awe and respect for nature would come to be shared by Ralph Waldo Emerson on the western side of the Atlantic, for most of the modern era, the demands of market capitalism have had little patience for Goethe's conception as to how the study of nature should proceed, and scholars trained in the European continental tradition have offered the most trenchant critiques toward the exploitation of nature, or as members of the Frankfurt School Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno have termed it in The Dialectic of Enlightenment, the domination of nature (Beherrschung der Natur). The term "nature" here can seem somewhat ambivalent, since it may refer to a person's inner nature and at the same time to the external, natural environment. In the latter case, the "domination of nature" describes the process of appropriation of the earth's natural resources through and in the form of technology by "Kings no less than merchants" ([1947] 2002:2). Environmentalist scholars in North America have found this model of critique useful in their own studies of the human relation to their natural environment (see Leiss [1972] 1994; Worster 1986). Quite central to the inheritance of the Frankfurt School's concept of the domination of nature is its materialist emphasis on modes of production and its resistance against jettisoning the concept of the metanarrative (Worster 1990:1142-43). Readers will doubtless find my views for the most part aligned with this sort of critique.

But it is important to examine another side of environmental studies, represented most notably by historian William Cronon, which has emphasized the role of culture in the perception of nature (1983, 1991, [1995] 1996), and therefore the direction of the whole environmental movement. The lead essay in Cronon's edited volume Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature ([1995] 1996), titled The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature, places the environmental movement in a historical context, not in any Marxist historical context (i.e., privileging means and modes of production) but rather in a historicized cultural context which emphasizes instead intellectual movements, or, the ideal rather than the material. Thus, Cronon: "Indeed, it is not too much to say that the modern environmental movement is itself a grandchild of romanticism and post-frontier ideology, which is why it is no accident that so much environmentalist discourse takes its bearings from the wilderness these intellectual movements helped create" (72). William Cronon buttresses his argument by examining and quoting those wild men of the nineteenth century, Henry David Thoreau and John Muir. One begins to see connections between Cronon's way of emphasizing the cultural and the extent to which nature can be considered as subjective, or mentally constructed, and the picture which Herzog has offered through the use of the wild man star of his documentary. As Herzog explained to interviewer Paul Cronin, "For me a true landscape is not just a representation of a desert or a forest. It shows an inner state of mind, literally inner landscapes … This is my real connection to Caspar David Friedrich…" (2002:136).

While William Cronon argued that Uncommon Ground intended to reflexively question the environmental

movement so that it would not proceed on intellectual foundations "that may ultimately prove unsustainable"(26), he met with strident opposition, especially in Wild Earth magazine.[14] One article by Bill Willers, "The Trouble with Cronon," accused him of having "dealt quite a blow to the Environmental Movement." Cronon, as I believe they quite correctly saw, had formulated his argument while failing to take the possibility of anti-environmental machinations into account. As Cronon writes in the 1996 edition, "These essays were written just before a powerful conservative resurgence produced by a Republican-dominated Congress that quickly distinguished itself as the most hostile toward environmental protection in all of U.S. history." Thereafter, he remarks that the counter-revolution against environmentalism had met with more resistance than its supporters had hoped (19). On the other hand Herzog offers two positions about his filmmaking, which are both incompatible, neither one being independently tenable. Concerning the environment, he says to Paul Cronin, "We comprehend … that nuclear power is a real danger for mankind, that overcrowding of the planet is the greatest of all. We have understood that the destruction of the environment is another enormous danger." However, he also claims that "the lack of adequate imagery is a danger of the same magnitude" (2002:66). One may suppose however, that Herzog's belief that it is possible for film to remain in a realm independent from the political could lead him to make this last claim: he states that he has never been into using the medium of film as a political tool (56), and this strikes me as being hauntingly naïve. The dismal and yet powerful statement that the common denominators of the universe are "chaos, hostility, and murder" is antithetical to the hope for sustainable society, and seems to condone the reversion of western society back to a stage of life being brutish, short, and nasty (as described in Hobbes [1651] 1973:98-102), while the continued domination of nature insures that technological development plays an ever increasing role therein.

While one watches Treadwell in his mood swings, one may notice that Herzog seems to represent himself and his own views in quite polarized reaction to those of Treadwell, as though in contrast to Treadwell's beautiful seemliness of the dream world, he is presenting the horrifying and intoxicated reality which underlies Treadwell's illusory conception of nature. In the documentary In the Edges, which depicts the making of the soundtrack for Grizzly Man, Herzog is seen watching a clip of Treadwell swimming with a bear, petting the creature from behind. Seeming to echo the thoughts of Van Daele, Herzog comments: "You see, it looks like complete harmony of man and beast, like him in unison with nature. We believe things are alright and they are not when you find the dark menace in it" (2005). This dynamic, in its illusion-reality orientation, resembles Nietzsche's juxtaposition of the Apollonian and Dionysian (Nietzsche [1872] 1993).[15] But the director's stark view on nature made itself manifest long ago, during the filming of his Fitzcarraldo. Todd Gitlin comments in a review over the disastrous consequences of Herzog filming in South America, and discussing Les Blank's documentary Burden of Dreams (which covers the turbulent events), writes, "…Herzog fulminates against the very nature he went half-way around the world to find. Just as the Romantic identifies with nature's unspoiled qualities, its wildness or peace … Herzog inverts the image, and some decidedly unpretty themes leap out of the German past…" (1983:51). He then quotes Herzog at length:

> I see fornication and asphyxiation and choking and growing for survival and growing and rotting. The trees here are in misery. The birds here are in misery—they don't sing, they just shriek in pain ... We are cursed for what we are doing here! It is a land that God, if he exists, has created in anger! There is no order here, no harmony in the universe! The only harmony is of overwhelming, collective murder! It is a vile, base obscenity! (ellipses mine, quoted in Gitlin 1983:51-52)

Whether Treadwell reminded Herzog of a former version of the film maker himself is something only Herzog can say. However, just as Herzog cannot use the camera in a way that is non-political, he also cannot discuss nature in a way that is non-philosophical. I am reminded of a conjecture offered by William James, whose tendency toward "middle-of-the-roadism" which was so important for pragmatism led him to the juxtaposition of exorbitant polar positions (West 1993:57), "The Tender-Minded" and "The Tough-Minded". The former includes characteristics such as Idealistic, Optimistic, Religious, Free-willist, while the latter by contrast is Materialistic, Pessimistic, Irreligious, Fatalistic (James [1907] 1968:22). While these traits do not perfectly fit the eco-warrior and the Bavarian director respectively, one sees where Herzog could have developed a more balanced view.

3. Toward a Conclusion of Meaning

The decision to narrate events assigns meaning to them (Jameson [1961] 1984). The question of what kind of meaning remains, however. In my view, Herzog could have extended a deeper meaning to the story of Treadwell had he proceeded further in his thought, either toward the "middle-of-the-roadism" described above, or perhaps

better, toward any sort of synthesis (Aufhebung). Whereas he might have assigned a higher form of meaning to the events of Treadwell's life by dialectical thought, he was merely antithetical. While Herzog sometimes showed footage from high altitudes, which served in some respect to grant some authority to certain statements he made, I do not see him as reaching any higher position: he may have moved his position on a horizon, but I have not been able to locate verticality or transcendence of any sort. As troubled as Treadwell was, Herzog might have considered that his subject's lack of maturation did not occur within a social vacuum, or what possible options might have been open to him had he learned to channel his energies in a more constructive way before arriving in Long Beach. He might have considered that a conception of the natural cycle as consisting of predators can be assimilated into a conception of nature that allows for a certain amount of dissidence between the species within an overall balance that is somewhat harmonious, in weather patterns, the food chain, and so forth. In a time of climate change, gene manipulation, and the basest exploitation of the earth's natural resources, this should be considered imperative.

Tangentially, Herzog also shortchanges what the German tradition has to offer. By the cant in his narration of the life and death of a real figure in Treadwell, he serves to "superegoize" not only the story, but also the viewing audience (Deleuze and Guattari [1972] 1983:134). As a judge of character, Herzog appears to have learned from old Goethe, even though he is not as harsh. Yet, the attempt to practice Goethe's ideal for character might have worked quite well in a society which had adopted Goethe's conception of the human relationship with nature. But throughout the 19th and much of the 20th century, Goethe's conception to nature has hardly received adherence. It may be time to begin ethically exploring that which experience as a means to understanding entails, while otherwise attempting to absorb and assimilate the abiding wisdom in much of Goethe's insight into a pragmatic theory of daily political participation. And while Herzog may have intended to close the discussion by stating that the arguments as to how wrong or right Treadwell was disappear into a fog, I imagine that his film will only strengthen debate, especially during an era in which the mass media derives infotainment from characters such as Treadwell, Cindy Sheehan, and Britney Spears, who are willing to take their personal pain forward, acting out in front of the public and crying for help.

Endnotes

1. My thanks to Ben Agger, Jennifer William, Lynn Miles-Morillo and John Herda for their critical commentary; however, all claims are my own.

2. See Jay Antani, in the 2006 Perihelion Journal. (http://www.perihelionjournal.com/reviews/GrizzlyMan.html, accessed Nov. 30, 2007)

3. See "Review by Ross Anthony". (http://rossanthony.com/G/grizzlyman.shtml, accessed Nov. 30, 2007)

4. This is a problematic aspect for Herzog, presenting such an artistic documentary to an American audience: many Americans have seen Treadwell being interviewed on television during the late 1990s, when he was at the height of his celebrity. Herzog has chosen a subject matter for a documentary that has been the subject of books by other authors, who perhaps do not dramatize the way Herzog does. While some may consider Herzog to be artistic in his representation of Treadwell, others may find there to be a certain amount of cant in Herzog's representation.

5. See Mike Lapinski, p. 145.

6. I find that Egli's comment shows deeper insight into Treadwell than Herzog's representation. Herzog very often focuses on Treadwell's wanting to become a bear, arguing that Treadwell makes a clear distinction between the people's world and that of the bears. Egli's comment shows that Treadwell also wanted the bears to become human. In his book Among Grizzlies, he refers to one bear as having "a maniacal glint in his eye" (Treadwell and Palovak 1997:61) and to others as having "passionate sex" (66, 80, 85). He also dreams of taking bears with him to an Italian restaurant in San Francisco where one bear would "inhale thirty-three orders of hearty lasagne," while the staff would toss gourmet pizzas into another's mouth (99).

7. In the documentary In the Edges: The Grizzly Man Session (Herzog 2005), Herzog carries on the following discourse in regard to the music played in the background during this particular scene: "This is not country and western music, you see, that's for the crackers, that's for the middle class America and so, but this is for the cowboys. That song is for the Rodeo riders, that's where the real men [sic]!"

8. Refer back to note 6.

9. Here Herzog is referring to Klaus Kinski, the actor who played the lead role in his films Aguirre: Der Zorn Gottes, Woyzeck, and Cobra Verde, and whom Herzog once called a "genius" (see Cronin 2002:87-93, 139, 155-61, 208-210).

10. See Marrit Ingman's interview, "Discord and Ecstacy: Werner Herzog on 'Grizzly Man.'" (http://www.austinchronicle.com/gyrobase/Issue/story?oid=oid%3A285426, accessed Nov. 30, 2007)

11. See Gerhard P. Knapp's entry on Georg Büchner in The Literary Encyclopedia. (http://www.litencyc.com/php/speople.php?rec=true&UID=5188, accessed Jan. 15, 2008)

12. Treadwell at one point does contend, in a manner which one imagines Nietzsche might applaud, "Fortunately, unlike humans, brown grizzlies don't hold grudges" (Treadwell and Palovak 1997:62).

13. See Jennifer Marston William's entry on Monika Maron in The Literary Encyclopedia. (http://www.litencyc.com/php/speople.php?rec=true&UID=5699, accessed Jan. 15, 2008)

14. See Wild Earth, Winter 1996/1997.

15. As I see it, Nietzsche's initial conception of aesthetics has been quite seminal for Herzog's conception of man's relation to nature. Writing over Nietzsche's aesthetic paradigm, Allan Megill comments parenthetically: "One notes the absence here of any attempt to canvass possibilities intermediate between X and Y, between 'cloud cuckoo land' and 'the essence of things'" (1985:51).

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"Privatized" Militarism: A New Era?

Carl Boggs

The growth of U.S. militarism over the past few decades appears to have moved beyond the confines of the Pentagon behemoth, with the rapid expansion of corporate warriors – referred to here as Professional Military Contractors (PMCs) – that have taken off with the Bush presidency and its shift toward a "Revolution in Military Affairs". These "private soldiers", many regarded as highly-paid mercenaries, now perform a wide range of battlefield, security, and "reconstruction" activities at a time when U.S. armed forces face mounting recruitment crises as combat troops are stretched to exhaustion in Iraq and Afghanistan. PMCs like DynCorp, KBR, Blackwater, and MPRI draw from combat veterans around the world to provide vital military-support, construction, and related functions. Predictably, those who run the PMCs harbor a strong, even fanatical, interest in war, promoting an aggressive foreign policy where U.S. geopolitical ambitions are viewed as being at stake. Such interest is stimulated by a mixture of profit-making and patriotism, infused (for most) with a love of battlefield adventure. A major problem with PMCs, as many critics stress, is their near-total immunity from legal sanctions in countries where they operate – and, to some extent, from established rules of warfare. There is growing agreement that, in the wake of repeated atrocities, PMCs have come to represent an outlaw force beholden to no domestic or global authority.

In the specific case of Blackwater, its fortunes have skyrocketed in the wake of 9/11, the war on terrorism, and the U.S. invasion of Iraq, giving rise to what some call an out-of-control Praetorian Guard in the Middle East and beyond. According to Jeremy Scahill, whose book Blackwater has become a celebrated bestseller, winner of several awards, and equivalent to what Bill Moyers calls a "one-man truth squad", PMCs like Blackwater constitute a dramatic new phase in U.S. military evolution as "privatization" and outsourcing of armed-services functions combine greater flexibility with sharply-reduced political and legal accountability – not to mention skyrocketing corporate profits. (Scahill 2007: xvii-xxii) Thus: "With almost no debate the Bush administration has outsourced to the private sector many of the functions historically handled by the military." (Scahill 2007: xx) Further, "Private forces are [now] almost a necessity for a United States bent on retaining its declining empire." (Scahill 2007: xxiv) In a context of military occupation like Iraq, moreover, Blackwater Worldwide (formerly USA) and kindred contractors provide essential infrastructural and security functions, allowing the military to concentrate on combat operations, while the PMCs manage to escape institutional responsibility for actions that are frequently criminal. Since PMCs are largely outside the law – Congressional efforts in 2007 and 2008 to reign them in proving mostly futile – private contractors, often labeled "mercenaries", can often get away with all kinds of anti-social behavior and human-rights violations leading up to torture and murder. Scahill's main claim, which deserves more critical scrutiny than it has so far received, is that the rise of PMCs "is an epic [story] in the history of the military-industrial complex . . . [and] a story about the future of war, democracy, and governance." (Scahill 2007: xxvii)

At the very moment Scahill's critically-acclaimed book was awash in media attention, a film about the privatization of war, War, Inc. – directed by and starring John Cusack – was reaching popular audiences with a message of how corporate greed is corrupting the U.S. military. A low-budget movie, it dramatizes the life and work of a corrupt profiteer named Brand Hauser (played by Cusack) who symbolizes the evil of PMC operatives in the fictional nation of Turaqistan. War, Inc. was inspired partly by the gruesome deaths of four Blackwater contractors in March 2004 at the hands of Fallouja insurgents. The film clearly depicts the PMCs as embodying the dark side of warfare. Referring to the privatization of military functions, Cusack says: "Everything is outsourced; everything is for profit. I don't think people really understand that corporations have privatized the war to the point where the war itself is a cost-

plus business. They are hollowing out the very core functions of what it means to be a government. They're using the State Department as an ATM." In the end, adds Cusack, "they should be sent to prison. They should be convicted. Their ideology should be shamed. We should revolt against them. We should mock them."[1] Indeed mockery is precisely the aim of Cusack's film, a rare departure from the norm of Hollywood war and action movies glorifying violence and combat. Not surprisingly, major studios refused to back War, Inc., which Cusack situates in the tradition of Dr. Strangelove.

Looking at Iraq alone, there has been more than enough PMC outlawry and criminality to lend credence to the criticisms leveled by Scahill, Cusack, and others. The most scandalous episode occurred in September 2007, when Blackwater guards were accused of shooting to death 17 Iraqi civilians while protecting a State Department motorcade in Baghdad. Angered Iraqi officials immediately moved to cancel Blackwater's license to operate in the country – the first effort of a government compromised by occupation to assert itself against foreign contractors long accused of horrific acts that were never punished. (Within a few days, of course, the license was reaffirmed.) Since 2003 the PMCs, crucial to U.S. operations at every level, had been subordinate only to their U.S. corporate and government employers, who gave them virtually unlimited scope to work. Iraq national security advisor Mowaffak Rubale said his government should use the Blackwater episode to overhaul private contractors' immunity from Iraqi jurisdiction, granted by Coalition Provisional Authority head L. Paul Bremer in 2003 and later extended – a measure called CPA Order 17, passed outside any democratic process. While many Iraqis demanded Blackwater employees be held accountable for murder, no procedures were in place to do so. In fact PMCs were not even subject to the Universal Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) in Iraq or anywhere else (although Congress moved to correct this problem in late 2007). (Scahill 2007: xxi-xxii)

The September 2007 incident was just one of many where contractors have shot and killed civilians. Despite reports of atrocities, including torture, no PMC employee has been prosecuted in Iraq or the U.S., although they are theoretically accountable to American domestic laws. Witnesses said dozens of people were wounded along with the 17 killed when the Blackwater convoy sped into Nisoor Square in western Baghdad. Although U.S. Embassy and Blackwater officials claimed the convoy had come under fire, Iraqi witnesses reported just the opposite – that no one had attacked the contractors.[2] Based in Moyock, North Carolina and founded by former Navy SEAL Erik Prince, Blackwater as of mid-2008 had nearly a thousand contractors in Iraq, its mission embraced by the State Department and Pentagon. The September 2007 assault was investigated by the Iraq Interior Ministry, which concluded the guards fired on civilians without provocation. Still, the U.S. quickly agreed to allow Blackwater to resume its work in Iraq, thumbing its nose at domestic authorities who, in any case, have little if any leverage in dealing with the heavy-handed American presence.

The State Department contends that PMCs do not require a license from the Iraqi government since their contracts are sanctioned directly by U.S. officials – a peculiar notion for those pretending to bring democracy to Iraq. Even American officials, however, when speaking candidly, admit that previous PMC outlawry in Iraq has been ignored or swept under the rug. "It's one of the big holes we've had in our policy, the lack of control, the lack of supervision over security forces", according to one U.S. diplomat in the field. "No one took on the responsibility of policing these units – neither the military people, nor the regional security office [of the Embassy]. So many people, not just the Blackwater are there in Baghdad unsupervised with basically diplomatic immunity."[3] PMC operations in Iraq have been aptly described as "carte blanche", as in the Wild West, where armed mercenaries are said to roam the land freely. The diplomat said that incident reports amounted to a whitewash, nobody acting upon them, adding that in a few cases PMC managers fired employees for killing civilians, but those same workers could be back in Iraq with another firm in a few months, part of a "revolving door". Observed one security contractor quoted in the Los Angeles Times, "They are all untouchable. They've shot up other private security contractors, Iraqi military police, and civilians, often pushing themselves through crowded urban streets in the process."[4] Whether the September 2007 events will turn out to have any restraining impact on PMC behavior remains to be seen.

Scahill describes a series of abductions, killings, and torture at the hands of PMC operatives in Iraq, reminiscent of U.S.-sponsored horrors in Central America during the 1980s. By late 2006, when an average of nearly 1000 Iraqis were being killed weekly, ". . . the big-picture reality was that the country was quickly becoming the global epicenter of privatized warfare with scores of heavily-armed groups of various loyalties and agendas roaming the streets and countryside of Iraq." (Scahill 2007: 289) Groups within the PMCs took on the characteristics of storm troopers, with their own private aircraft, weapons caches, and communications systems. In February 2007, to cite another instance of PMC mayhem, a sniper killed three guards outside the state-run Iraqi Media Network office in Baghdad.

An investigation quickly revealed that Blackwater was guilty, but no one was ever charged much less convicted of what was obviously an attack on a news outlet considered hostile to the U.S. occupation. As usual, everything was kept silent behind a wall of secrecy. One American official even conceded: "Because they [contractors] are security, everything was a big secret. They draw the wagon circle. They protect each other."[5] Added one Iraqi official: "They don't have car licenses. They don't have any names. Nobody knows who they are. If they are asked anyway, they bully people."[6] The PMCs answer only to their American protectors which, for Blackwater, means the Embassy security staff. Regarded as a pack of criminals by most Iraqis, PMC operatives are understandably viewed differently by the people who run them – as vehicles of peace, democracy, and stability.

When framed against the wide expanse of U.S. imperialism, none of this should come across as particularly surprising. At least since World War II, Pentagon strategy has followed divergent paths. Of course there is nothing new or startling about U.S. reliance on corporate-funded contractors and even mercenaries as the Pentagon, State Department, and CIA have long employed some variant of PMCs. It is true that since the early 1990s the rapid growth of contractors in the field has furnished a crucial supplement to U.S. military activity that increasingly relies on limited troop deployments in accordance with the dictates of technowar – a trend already explored by such writers as Ken Silverstein and Peter Singer. (Silverstein 2000; Singer 2003) Since 1994 the Pentagon has entered into nearly 4000 contracts with U.S. companies, worth more than $300 billion.[7] One obvious advantage of PMCs over regular military units is loosened oversight and regulation, as mentioned, allowing for greater secrecy and more latitude in violating rules of engagement. Further, since their work is often seen as "constructive" or "humanitarian", the PMCs typically receive less fallout when things go wrong, although the September 2007 events could ultimately provide a corrective.[8] In Saudi Arabia, MPRI, Vinnell, and DynCorp have trained security forces well known for their use of torture. Based in Falls Church, Virginia, DynCorp has worked closely with the U.S. military in Afghanistan, Iraq, Bolivia, Bosnia, Somalia, Haiti, Colombia, Kosovo, and Kuwait, where it works primarily to train local police and military forces. In Colombia it has helped the army eradicate coca crops and crush rebellions, at times even taking on direct combat roles.[9] DynCorp receives 96 percent of its roughly two billion dollars annually from the U.S. government. Its employees were implicated in the trafficking of women and children in Bosnia during the late 1990s, although no one every faced criminal actions. In Afghanistan the firm came into heavy criticism for aggressive tactics in its training and oversight of local police forces.[10] The situation in Iraq, predictably, has been even worse. In September 2005 General Karl Horst, deputy commander of the Third Infantry Division, compaining about DynCorp and other PMCs, said: "These guys run loose in this country and do stupid stuff. There's no authority over them, so you can't come down hard on them when they escalate force . . . They shoot people and someone has to deal with the aftermath. It happens all over the place."[11]

In May 2007 the American Civil Liberties Unioin filed suit against a Boeing Company subsidiary accused of facilitating CIA programs involving torture and other abuses. Since 2001 Jeppeson Dataplan, Inc. of San Jose was reported to have provided services to the CIA for its "extraordinary rendition" programs at several locations. According to a suit filed by three plaintiffs, the firm assisted the CIA in more than 70 rendition activities, a charge based on investigations conducted in Spain, Sweden, Italy, and Pakistan. The company was said to be helping exact "confessions" in the war on terrorism. The ACLU went to court under the Alien Tort Claims Act of 1789, which allows foreigners to file suits in U.S. courts for human-rights violations.[12]

Aside from questions of privatization, secrecy, and immunity from prosecution, the PMC hiring of mercenary soldiers (where that takes place) means that personnel killed and wounded do no enter the overall casualty count, keeping these costs of war hidden from public view. Statistics on PMC killed and wounded are elusive at best, one report (in August 2008) estimating more than 1200 deaths.[13] When this reality is added to contractors' ability to operate largely outside rules of engagement, the logic behind the illegality of mercenaries contained in the Geneva Conventions becomes evident.

Revelations by Scahill, Silverstein, Singer, and others about PMC activity have broadened public awareness about how the U.S. nowadays goes about its military operations. The picture, as we have seen, is not a pretty one. Cusack is surely correct in stating that "what we have here is a protectionist racket" whose managers "should be sent to prison."[14] And it might be possible, as Scahill argues, that "with an adventurous president in the White House, mercenaries could enable an endless parade of invasions, covert operations, occupations, coups d'etat – all with layers of bureaucratic protections, plausible deniability, and disregard for the will (or lack thereof) of the population." Scahill 2007: 366)

Yet a central question that arises here is whether Blackwater and kindred military enterprises actually represent a fundamental shift in U.S. military operations – that is, whether they amount to a new phase of modern warfare

and exercise a momentous impact on "the future of war, democracy, and governance" that Scahill claims. Can we conclude, along with Scahill, that "the story of Blackwater's rise is an epic one in the history of the military-industrial complex"? (Scahill 2007: xxvii) Viewed against the historical backdrop of a U.S. imperialism dedicated to global supremacy, there is ample reason to be skeptical of such arguments. Four sets of issues can be delineated within this line of discourse – privatization, mercenary work, flaunting of warfare laws, and immunity from criminal prosecution. At issue is whether we are witnessing the kind of dramatic transformations in any of these areas of U.S. military activity that Scahill and others insist is taking place.

It is difficult to know what to make of repeated and urgent warnings about the dangers of a "privatized" military according to which PMCs are supposedly remaking the Pentagon landscape. After all, the famous military-industrial complex has been around for many decades, its power historically grounded in a merger of interests – corporate, government, military – and its expensive programs, weapons systems, and deployments made possible through a labyrinthine network of private contracts. Understood thusly, "privatization" is nearly as old as the American military itself, an integral part both of capitalist development and armed-forces traditions. At present we have massive, record Pentagon spending, officially earmarked for "defense" and "security", all fully supported by Democrats and Republicans in amounts beyond what the rest of the world spends on military force combined. According to The Defense Monitor, the total estimated U.S. military budget for 2008 (all programs) comes to a stratospheric $927 billion, including money targeted for wars and homeland security – more than half of all discretionary federal spending.[15] Most expenditures are routed through the familiar corporate beneficiaries, with Lockheed-Martin ($37 billion for 2007), Northrop-Grumman ($23.6 billion), Raytheon ($19.5 billion), General Dynamics ($18.7 billion), United Technologies ($7.7 billion), and General Electric ($4.6 billion) leading the way, followed by hundreds of smaller contractors reaping super-profits off warmaking and preparations for war. American taxpayers pay for elaborate, high-tech, often useless or redundant Pentagon systems that feed the coffers of such parasitical firms. Weapons systems like the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter (projected at $300 billion), the F-22 Raptor fighter (another $65 billion), and new Virginia-class submarines (nearly $ three billion each), all produced by profit-seeking corporations, would seem to exemplify "privatized" operations long familiar to Pentagon managers. The U.S. commitment to exhorbitant weapons programs and other military projects over the next several years figures to reach some $1.6 trillion, a total certain to rise as American global deployments in the war on terror expand.[16]

Military "privatization" in fact has a long and deep legacy dwarfing anything the PMCs, including Blackwater, currently represent. (Blackwater received about one billion dollars from the State Department in 2007.) Compared to nearly a trillion dollars earmarked for military-related programs in 2008 – not to mention trillions more for future weapons programs – the money spent on PMCs, while noteworthy, is scarcely enough to drive U.S. foreign and military policy or even trigger new alarms. Nor, for the most part, does it depart radically from established patterns. Writing as early as 1935 (and referring to World War I), General Smedley Butler commented that for the U.S. "war is a racket [and] always has been", with corporations like DuPont, Bethlehem Steel, and Anaconda Copper reaping profits at roughly ten times their previous levels. According to Butler, a World War I marine hero, at least 21,000 new millionaires and billionaires were created by the Great War, capitalizing on the drive to "make the world safe for democracy". (Butler 2005: 23) Later, books like C. Wright Mills' The Power Elite (1956), Fred Cook's The Warfare State (1962), and Seymour Melman's Pentagon Capitalism (1970) would offer historical and theoretical perspective on the growth of an unprecendented corporate-military behemoth — the very topic that preoccupied President Eisenhower in his famous 1961 farewell address. The notion of a "privatized" military where corporations, the state, and the Pentagon forged a seamless whole, most systematically laid out in Melman's The Permanent War Economy (1985), had become a durable element of American life. Since the U.S. had long been a state-capitalist society with a growing armed-services bureaucracy, all this was to be expected. Moreover, as the American postwar global presence expanded, it naturally followed that superpower economic, political, and military agendas would be advanced and consolidated in tandem. After all, by 2006 the U.S. had amassed more than five trillion dollars in overseas investments while accounting for some two trillion dollars in foreign trade yearly; its networks of finance, commerce, and trade ringed the planet, as did its system of military bases, deployments, and high-tech operations designed to protect corporate globalization.

In this context the Pentagon has emerged as a central fixture in the development of modern U.S. capitalism to the extent that, as Melman long ago observed, "a modern military budget is a capital fund." (Melman 1988: 9) Members of Congress are with few exceptions beholden to this system of "privatized" military goods and services, ready to support gargantuan Pentagon budgets in return for campaign funds and local boondoggles awarded to firms like Raytheon, General Dynamics, Lockheed-Martin, Honeywell, and Northrop-Grumman ostensibly for jobs and

"growth". In 2005 more than 35,000 lobbyists plied their trade in Washington -- 65 for every Congress member. As Chalmers Johnson notes, this form of "privatized" Keynesian militarism amounts to nothing less than full-scale corruption of the legislative branch. (Johnson 2007: 266) Blackwater and other PMCs were of course late arrivals to the kind of racketeering that Smedley Butler anticipated many decades ago.

Scahill, Cusack, and other critics might want to stress the unique role of PMCs in providing military-support personnel for U.S. operations – that is, a more specific but rather limited realm of "privatization". They have a point. However, the distinction between goods/services and personnel can easily be exaggerated since government functions typically overlap in many ways – for example, in the areas of training, logistics, and security. Corporations like Blackwater, DynCorp, and KBR carry out security, logistical, food, medical, transport, maintenance, and various technical services indispensible to troop support on the battlefield and elsewhere, as well as embassy protection and various construction tasks. The PMCs deploy battalions of lobbyists to help secure contracts, charge exorbitant rates for their work, and reap superprofits in the process. What, then, about a more conventional "private contractor" like Raytheon – in 2007 the fifth largest recipient of Pentagon funding? This established military contractor has some 73,000 employees, annual revenues of $20 billion, and six major business divisions producing information systems, surveillance networks, technical services, homeland-security supports, electronics for space and missile-defense systems, and logistical programs. Raytheon is a prolific manufacturer of missiles, including the Tomahawk, Maverick, Sidewinder, Patriot, Sparrow, and Hawk series widely deployed in the Middle East. Like many PMCs, it trains military personnel around the world. Raytheon has contributed tens of millions of dollars to electoral campaigns and lobbies heavily for its favorite expensive programs. In 1999 the corporation was targeted by several class-action lawsuits over false claims about 1997 and 1998 revenues, paying out $410 million in settlements.[17] Like bigger contractors such as Lockheed-Martin and Boeing, Raytheon has for many decades sunk deeper into the swamp of military racketeering or "privatization" than more recent, smaller, claimants like Blackwater.

What can be said, then, of the familiar PMC image as bastion of mercenaries running amok in Afghanistan, Iraq, Colombia, and other locales? The stories of well-armed, out-of-control fascist goons, shooting up neighborhoods in Baghdad and elsewhere, are by now well-known. The September 2007 Blackwater episode was surely no isolated case, although the full account of PMC-caused mayhem will probably never be known. Yet while the PMCs are shamelessly reaping huge profits off the war and occupation, the label "mercenary" – generally applied to freewheeling combat troops for hire – has been liberally overused and exaggerated by Scahill and others. Virtually all of the PMC employees working in Iraq (more than 100,000 as of mid-2008) serve in various troop-support capacities, as security for the State Department, or in construction work. While private contractors are often armed, there are no PMC combat units as such in Iraq or anywhere else, although some battlefield activity has been reported in Colombia. The vast majority of PMC workers is well-trained, highly-skilled, and dedicated to American military agendas – a picture at odds with the familiar opportunistic "soldier of fortune" participating in many wars. Although PMCs obviously contribute human labor-power to U.S. imperial ventures, they rarely do so as part of any elaborate "mercenary" operations. (This is a crucial point when one considers the subtitle of Scahill's book: "Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army".)

The question of mercenary involvement is admittedly murky, especially given the blurred distinction between combat and noncombat or support roles in the field. The main task of PMCs is to free military forces to concentrate more fully on battlefield challenges. Interestingly, although international law prohibits the use of mercenaries as soldiers, it has no problem with private contractors in their support capacity even where, as in Iraq, they clearly bolster combat effectiveness. At different times and places, however, PMCs have helped to organize and train mercenary troops for military action in support of U.S. operations. Thus MPRI, working closely with the Pentagon, funded and trained a motley assemblage of Balkan troops involved in a series of bloody offensives against Serbs in 1995, including Operation Lightning Storm that killed hundreds of people and forced another 200,000 from their homes. PMCs in former Yugoslavia assisted militia groups that often paid little heed to rules of engagement. Even here, however, it would be incorrect to say these were privately-organized mercenaries insofar as U.S. government and military forces were deeply engaged in all phases of the work.

Washington "mercenary" activity of this sort in Central America throughout the 1980s was far more extensive than anything in the Middle East and Balkans. In Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador the U.S. invested billions of dollars to fund, train, and organize local militias – essentially death squads – that relied on a combination of Pentagon, CIA, and private assistance. The barbaric legacy of the Contras in Honduras and Nicaragua is well known. Recruited from several countries, they carried out mass killings, torture, forced incarceration, and other atrocities at the behest of their Washington masters. (Whether this came from government, private, or combined

government-private support seems entirely secondary.) Many death-squad leaders and operatives were trained at the infamous School of the Americas located at Fort Bening, Georgia. In general the label "mercenary" seems more applicable to Central America in the 1980s (and surely before) than to anything that came later in Iraq – but even here it has limits.

The claim by Scahill and others that PMC operatives in Iraq, among other locales, are often gangs of reckless, shoot-first thugs, while true enough, has been greatly exaggerated against the general backdrop of battlefield horrors. The notion that PMCs in Iraq are somehow particularly guilty of war crimes and human-rights abuses – or that their record is worse than that of regular U.S. troops – does not stand the test of evidence. Moreover, oft-repeated assertions that PMC guards and other support personnel have carte blanche to flaunt rules of engagement, again factual to a degree, misses a crucial point: American troops have long skirted or violated such rules with impunity despite being subject to the UCMJ and constraints of international law. While government oversight of PMCs is lax where it exists at all, opening the door to wanton criminality, formal oversight of Army, Marine, and Air Force operations has never meant that rules of engagement would be followed strictly or consistently. During 2005-07 Blackwater employees alone were reported to be involved in some 200 shooting incidents (including the September 2007 outburst), many under cloudy circumstances; more than 50 people were fired and sent home. The number of violations could surely be multiplied several times when the actions of all PMCs are finally taken into account – a terrible record indeed. As instruments of U.S. militarism, there can be no defending the private contractors, in Iraq or anywhere else.

Yet compared to the barbaric policies and actions of the U.S. military itself, the PMC record must be considered peripheral to the larger history. It is worth remembering that the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq was itself illegal, a crime against peace, meaning that five years of death, destruction, and chaos can be laid squarely at the doorstep of Washington. The entire criminal enterprise has brought daily, virtual routine, horrors and misery to the Iraqi people: takeover of national institutions and resources by force, mass killings, torture, exiled populations, infrastructure devastation, large-scale arrests and detentions, use of inhumane weapons (depleted uranium, white phosphorous, anti-personnel and blockbuster bombs), local atrocities against civilians. Total Iraqi casualties (dead and wounded) have been estimated to reach as high as one and a half million (mid-2008), with another three million people forced from their homes. In November 2004 the city of Fallouja (population 350,000) was almost totally destroyed by the U.S. military, with hundreds killed, the urban infrastructure decimated, and most inhabitants forced to flee – a major war crime by any calculation. Iraqi civilians are regularly attacked by armed-forces vehicles, aircraft, and ground troops at checkpoints, while driving their cars, or tending to other daily business, the victims usually dismissed as "terrorists". Such violent outlawry has taken place in full disregard of the United Nations Charter, Geneva Conventions, and even UCMJ guidelines. And it has been entirely government planned, organized, funded, and implemented, courtesy of American taxpayers' largess, no reservations or apologies offered. The problem here was not so much lack of oversight but precisely the opposite – the systematic and painstaking oversight wrought by a deliberately criminal venture.

The claim, moreover, that "mercenaries [PMCs] could enable an endless parade of invasions, covert operations, occupations, coups d'etat" seems equally far-fetched. A quick review of recent history shows that the U.S. government itself (with no help from PMCs) has been restlessly active in pursuit of these activities for many decades. The list of postwar U.S. interventions abroad – and war crimes associated with them – is much too lengthy to detail here. None have ever been driven by distinctly "private" operations or the work of "mercenaries". Even in Iraq, the buildup to war was prepared by more than a decade of subversive (and illegal) activities — espionage, covert actions, bombings, and so forth – all conducted by the State Department, Pentagon, CIA, and NSA, with no direct "private" involvement. (Hiro 2002: chs. 5 and 6) The same applies to all postwar U.S. interventions. In 1947 the National Security Act placed the CIA under the direction of the National Security Council, which requires no Congressional approval of its decisions or actions. The laws of warfare are largely irrelevant to its functioning. The CIA was, in Chalmers Johnson's words, "turned into the personal, secret, unaccountable army of the president." (Johnson 2006: 93) Its covert actions throughout the postwar years have been mostly secret, including the setting up of local militias and death squads, support of rightwing dictatorships, overthrow of sovereign governments, and practice of "extraordinary rendition" (torture) initiated at the highest levels of government. Since the early 1950s, as Johnson notes, "the CIA has belonged as much to the president as the Praetorian Guard once belonged to the Roman emperors." (Johnson 2006: 95) A vast source of unchecked power, the CIA has been matched if not exceeded by the (even more secret) power of the NSA with its virtually unlimited capacities of electronic surveillance and intelligence. (Bamford 2005: part III) In the historical context of such imperial mayhem, the role of PMCs has been essentially marginal.

When it comes to the issue of immunity from prosecution, the case against PMCs would seem to be especially airtight: the image of out-of-control storm troopers shooting up Iraqi neighborhoods resonates in tales about Blackwater and other contractors. After all, the PMCs operate largely beyond the reach of the UCMJ, Iraqi domestic courts, and international law while their status before American courts seems ambiguous. Efforts by Congress (in September 2007) to bring PMCs under UCMJ jurisdiction, while formally successful, appear so far to have made little headway in the field. Despite hundreds of reported violent incidents in Iraq alone, no PMC employees have been prosecuted although dozens, as we have seen, were fired and sent home. The general understanding is that "privatization" allows for untrammeled barbarism with impunity.

That image is valid enough, as far as it goes. Criticisms of PMC immunity seem to imply that "private" workers have a special license to flaunt the law – that comparable behavior by Army or Marine troops is unlikely given possibly severe legal consequences, or in the event it did occur, harshly punished. History does not support this fanciful assumption, however, not only in Iraq but in any theater of U.S. military involvement, going back at least to World War II. First, there is simply no likelihood that American personnel of any type would be subject to prosecution in local courts. Second, the same applies to international law: there is no record of U.S. government or military violators having been brought to justice for war crimes before a global tribunal and, moreover, Washington rejects the International Criminal Court on grounds its personnel could never receive fair treatment. Third, military crimes committed during warfare are rarely if ever prosecuted in American domestic courts. That leaves the UCMJ, according to which criminal violations are brought before military court-martial procedures – meaning, in effect, that the U.S. armed forces are policing, judging, and punishing their own subjects In other words, the American military itself ends up as prosecution, judge, and jury concerning rules of engagement and other potential crimes. And the historical record, spanning World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Central America, Afghanistan, and Iraq has been nothing short of abysmal, an embarrassment to norms of legality.

The story of unpunished U.S. war crimes in Korea and Indochina alone – entirely the product of organized and supposedly monitored armed-forces units – would require several volumes to cover adequately. (Blum 2000: 125-67) In Iraq the situation has been notably terrible: as in earlier wars, criminal behavior has been uniformly ignored or covered up or, where that fails, justified with little fear of legal or moral sanctions. Rules of engagement have typically been viewed with cavalier disdain by high-level officers as well as troops in the field, in some degree the logical result of counterinsurgency operations where combatants and civilians cannot always be easily distinguished. Mostly, however, it has been the nightmare wrought by aerial warfare – often taken to extreme levels by U.S. commands – that accounts for huge civilian casualties routinely viewed (by U.S. decision-makers) as the inevitable, yet necessary, cost of high-tech warfare. (The U.S., joined by England, ensured that such crimes would never be brought before the Nuremberg Tribunal after World War II.) Barbarism from the air, even when carried out by inhumane weapons, has never been punished under any legal jurisdiction, though it usually amounts to wanton destruction of civilian targets according to the Geneva Conventions. At the same time, American ground attacks in such theaters as Korea, Vietnam, and Iraq have typically skirted rules of engagement, leaving an enormous legacy of atrocities, torture, POW killings, wanton destruction, chemical warfare, forced relocations and imprisonment, and support for death squads – all egregious violations of international law, with few perpetrators ever subjected to prosecution and fewer yet found guilty or given lengthy sentences. Anyone doubtful of such American military behavior should consult the Winter Solider hearings of 1971, featuring extensive testimony about Vietnam horrors spanning many years – hearings repeated in 2007, this time in connection with Iraq. The few U.S. war crimes that were duly prosecuted generally targeted lower-level offenders while ignoring higher-level culpability that in many cases goes all the way to the Pentagon and White House. And even these limited prosecutions (as at My Lai, Haditha, and Abu Ghraib) were mostly forced on the military after shocking revelations made by independent journalists.

In Iraq, where Blackwater and other PMC personnel enjoy immunity from prosecution, few U.S. troops have been prosecuted for crimes that have far exceeded anything attributed to the PMCs. As with My Lai in Vietnam, the well-known instances of torture at Abu Ghraib prison stand out as exceptional, brought to light by media exposes after being dismissed or covered up by the military. Several low-level prison guards were tried and convicted, a few receiving stiff sentences, while officers in decision-making positions (not to mention Washington officials) never faced legal consequences. Similar operations in Iraq and Afghanistan were spared criminal sanctions. Even more illuminating is the case of Marine atrocities at Haditha, on November 19, 2005, where 24 defenseless Iraqi civilians were slaughtered in the aftermath of a roadside bombing. This episode came to light thanks to a Time magazine report of March 16, 2006, after prolonged military efforts to cover up the atrocities. Shamefully, six of eight Marines charged had their cases dismissed at court-martial while a seventh, Lt. Col. Jeffrey Chessani (the highest-ranking

officer accused) was exonerated by a military judge at Camp Pendleton. Only one defendant remained – Lt. Andrew Grayson – accused not of murder but of dereliction of duty.[18] Coverups made it virtually impossible to prosecute serious offenses. Here as in many other cases the much-hyped "rules of engagement" failed to protect Iraqi civilians from murder at the hands of American occupying troops.

In yet another instructive episode, a Marine hearing officer at Camp Pendleton recommended against court-martialing Sgt. Johnny Winnick for manslaughter and assault in the shooting deaths of two Syrians and the wounding of two others in Iraq. Instead, the process was to involve nonjudicial punishment for dereliction of duty, leading to nothing more than a demotion and reprimand. In June 2007 Winnick opened fire on Syrians whose truck stopped near the Lake Tharthar region, continuing to shoot even after the men were down and incapacitated. No evidence was presented that the four men were planting a bomb, as Winnick claimed. Prosecution would have followed the charge that Winnick violated rules of engagement requiring "positive identification" that someone is committing a "hostile act" or has shown "hostile intent". At the preliminary hearing in Camp Pendleton, a defense expert successfully argued that rules of engagement are inevitably vague and confusing to frontline troops – even though, in this instance, the Syrians had already been rendered defenseless. One of Winnick's attorneys, Daniel Conway, said: "Our Marines deserve the benefit of the doubt when they make good-faith decisions to use force in self-defense during combat. Sgt. Winnick is a standup Marine, and he's eager to get back to work."[19] Of course the idea that "good-faith decisions" are being made in "self-defense" could be made for troops under virtually any battlefield circumstances. The point here is that, on the ground, levels of "immunity" in Iraq extend as much to regular military troops as to PMCs.

Horrific as they might be, therefore, no evidence is available to suggest the PMCs represent an epic transformation of the U.S. military, although their contributions to American geopolitical ambitions obviously deserve notice. In fact their operations depart little from business-as-usual in the maintenance of Empire. The notion that private contractors embody unique forms of outlawry, primarily as wayward mercenaries, makes little sense when viewed in the larger historical context of U.S. military interventions. The PMCs constitute yet another vehicle of American imperial objectives – a vehicle, moreover, not always known for its efficiency and reliability. Aside from their role in providing non-military supports for government and armed-forces work in the field along with construction, the general significance of PMCs – including the argument they are harbingers of new "privatizing" trends -- has been dramatically overstated by Scahill and others. The pattern of U.S. imperial ventures is nowadays, as before, set at the very top of officialdom and marked by political continuity.

Zeroing in on new threats of military privatization, Scahill argues that Blackwater and kindred contractors have built a "permanent institutional presence for themselves within the structures of the state." (Scahill 2007: 373) Perhaps, but what is so remarkable about such a development against the backdrop of a long-established military-industrial complex? It would be outlandish to suggest that, with a Pentagon budget now approaching one trillion dollars, that the PMCs might be in a position to subvert government control of the armed forces or its capacity to plan and carry out military ventures. In foreign policy it has become a truism that corporations, government, and military work closely in tandem to pursue U.S. global interests – a truism that seems to carry more rather than less weight over time. In fact its was C. Wright Mills, writing in 1956, who first clearly illuminated the problem, noting that "during World War II, the merger of the corporate economy and the military bureaucracy came into present-day significance." (Mills 1956: 212) Since then, at least, the idea of a separate military economy – or indeed separate government – has amounted to nothing but fiction.

The issue of PMC involvement in Pentagon and State Department work naturally commands interest, and Scahill's book (like those of Silverstein and Singer) has provided a great service here. At the same time, nothing done by private contractors really changesthe face of American capitalism, militarism, or imperialism. Whether these destructive forces on the world scene are advanced by "government" or "private" interests – or some combination of these, as has always been the case – seems largely irrelevant. More crucially, insofar as U.S. international behavior has long been infected by pervasive elements of outlawry and criminality, where then is the peculiar scandal associated with the PMCs? In the final analysis, are we not dealing with just another extension of the Pentagon war machine rather than some new out-of-control monster?

Endnotes

1. Los Angeles Times (May 23, 2008).

2. Los Angeles Times (September 18, 2007).

3. Los Angeles Times (September 18, 2007).

4. Los Angeles Times (September 18, 2007).

5. Los Angeles Times (September 21, 2007).

6. Los Angeles Times (September 21, 2007).

7. http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Private_military_contractor.

8. Silverstein, Private Warriors, pp. 172-73.

9. http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Private_military_contractor.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. Los Angeles Times (May 31, 2007).

13. Los Angeles Times (August 14, 2008).

14. Los Angeles Times (May 23, 2008).

15. See The Defense Monitor (March/April 2008).

16. Source for the 2007 private contractors' figures is: http://www.defensenews.com/static/features/top100/charts/rank_2007.

17. http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raytheon.

18. Los Angeles Times (June 14, 2008).

19. Los Angeles Times (July 15, 2008).

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The Passing of Jean Baudrillard

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"I do not have an historical perception of events ... I tend to mythologize." Baudrillard [1]

The nearly simultaneous deaths of Ingmar Bergman and Michelangelo Antonioni, in summer 2007, were said to mark the end of an era. The same could be said about the passing of Jean Baudrillard that year. His works engaged and manifested the deep tensions between the troubled path of post-World War Two era modernization and its optimistic mantra of science, growth, and progress. Some of the greatest films of the two directors did the same. Baudrillard belonged to a generation of intellectuals who began their work during postwar modernization's high tide, shifted gears when its fortunes sank, and completed their efforts when its revived, globalized, neoliberal version showed signs of erosion and even meltdown. Jean Baudrillard was a key figure in that ill-defined, many-sided, contested domain of "postmodernist" theory, which he once seemed to embrace and later rejected.[2]

In the 1980s and early 1990s, "postmodernism" became a catchword for a melange of politically ambiguous positions in cultural wars over relativism, rationality, science, multiculturalism, and the classical canon of western thought. Embroiled in these battles Baudrillard was a new sort of public intellectual,[3] who gained celebrity status in a "postmodern" context of new media, new means of cultural distribution, and new class fragments, with increased appetites for culture and theory. Consequently, it is not surprising that his passing was covered about as widely by the media as the deaths of the two famed directors. Baudrillard represents divergent, contradictory threads of the "postmodern" moment. His death, after that of his senior poststructuralist colleagues, mark this moment's ending.

Baudrillard was born in Reims, France. He says that he came from a family of peasant origins and was the first to pursue higher education. He translated German philosophical and literary works and was a teacher at a provincial, French lyceé. Baudrillard later became Henri Lefebvre's assistant at the University of Paris-Nanterre and began to teach sociology there in 1966 after completing his doctoral studies. He was a critic of the Algerian and Vietnam wars, and he identified with the segment of the French left who sought radical, cultural alternatives to official Marxism and Eurocommunism.[4] Nanterre was a center of student radicalism and of the May '68 student-worker protests. The soon after right-turn in France, Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, US-China accord, decline of student radicalism, European radical-left terrorism, and other events deflated the high hopes of the generation of '68. Baudrillard's "postmodern" drift from the left bore the imprint of this climate of defeat.

Baudrillard belonged to the important, postwar wave of French poststructuralist theorists (e.g., Foucault, Lyotard, Guattari, Deleuze, Derrida) who exerted major formative influences on "postmodernist" thought and expression. Allan Bloom railed against these thinkers for infecting the U.S. with a French-accented, Germanic bacillus (Nietzsche-Heidegger fusion) that spread "cultural relativism," made the West "just another culture," and appealed to America's "worst instincts" -- justifying already slackened traditional beliefs and discipline and, thus, threatening to derail, in advance, a hoped for post-Cold War era, "American moment in world history."[5] Left-leaning and liberal critics also warned about the dire consequences of "postmodernist" relativism.[6] Baudrillard was not nearly as luminous or feared a French intellectual, as Foucault or Derrida, but he was still one of the most characteristic figures of the postmodern moment. His work is hard to categorize; it is politically ambiguous, often obscure, and plural (he employed cultural, philosophical, literary, and artistic expression). However, when taken seriously, his work radically subverts core Enlightenment presuppositions of liberal-democratic culture, and manifests the extreme "relativism" and "nihilism" that critics of postmodernism decried. Yet other thinkers argue that he employed hyperbole and

tongue-in-cheek strategies to nudge or upset oblivious attitudes about the severe erosion of democratic culture.

On Baudrillard's March 6th passing, Eurozine stated: "Now the last of the great French philosophers of the 1970s is dead..."[7] The French Minister of Education declared that France had lost a "great creator" and one of its "great figures of... sociological thought" (International Herald Tribune 2007). Identifying Baudrillard as a "sociologist and philosopher," the French newspaper that once regularly published his columns, Libération (2007) said that his radical criticism of consumer society and the media had been suffused with "dark humor" and "joyous pessimism." Regardless of the French kudos, Baudrillard was a more important figure in English-speaking nations than at home. The New York Times asserted that he was a "postmodern guru," but that he was "too original and idiosyncratic" to fit neatly any political or theoretical category. It described Baudrillard as a: "French critic and provocateur... whose theories about consumer culture and the manufactured nature of reality were intensely discussed both in rarefied philosophical circles and in blockbuster movies like 'The Matrix'..." Although he wrote for newspapers, said The New York Times, he generally "shunned the media" that were the central focus of his works (Cohen 2007). Others also reported that he did not watch TV and was hesitant about digital technologies.

Calling Baudrillard a "cult figure," The Times (2007) of London said that he had diverse interests in photography, art, film, and poetry and influenced many artists and writers. It quoted novelist J.G. Ballard's claim that he "was the most important French thinker of the last twenty years." The Los Angeles Times also reported his impact on popular culture and on Jeff Koons, Haim Steinbach, Robert Longo, and Peter Nagy (Woo 2007). But the obits do not explain how closely readers attended to his ideas or how they employed them in their work. Baudrillard's critics say that his "influence" merely manifested his celebrity and superficial fascination with his provocative terms and images. They argue that one can glean only from the surface of his work, because that is all there is to it. It has no depth they say! Baudrillardians shrug. They imply that the philosopher's simulation of depthless, media culture both reveals and resists hyperrealty.

Most obits mentioned Baudrillard's ideas of simulation and hyperreality and reported his impact on Andy and Larry Wachowski's popular Matrix films and the 1999 opener's reference to him. The movie's central figure Neo opens a hollowed out, or simulated copy of Baudrillard's Simulacra and Simulation in which contraband computer discs are hidden.[8] The Wachowskis reportedly had the actors read his work to prepare for their performances. Baudrillard held that the directors attempted to contact him, after the first film, seeking his involvement in the sequels. However, he did not take up their offer. He said that The Matrix's Platonist thrust contradicted his idea of a realer than real hyperreality, which is exclusively surface, not a counterfeit image of an underlying reality, and is governed by a self-reproducing aleatory logic, not by a rational plot of a mindful elite.[9] Referring to the Matrix controversy, the Los Angeles Times said that: "Its false representation of a theory about false representation made the irony dizzyingly complete"(Woo 2007). Baudrillard was already a celebrity intellectual prior to The Matrix, but the movie enhanced his cult status. Unsurprisingly, Simulacra and Simulation (1994a) is by far his best selling text at Amazon.com, possibly manifesting the depthless, "postmodern" culture portrayed in the essays.

Baudrillard retired from his academic post at Nanterre in 1987, leaving more time for his creative efforts, travel, and public activities. He started writing regular columns for Libération, which he continued doing for a decade. In the 1990s, he worked the California lecture circuit and other major venues elsewhere. Several obits mentioned his Las Vegas area, poetry reading at Whiskey Pete's as if it were a prototypical Baudrillardian event; he performed bedecked in a gold lamé suit, accompanied by a cool band. The performance was later released on CD - Suicide Moi. Prospect's Marina Benjamin (1997) described his celebrity prior to its post-Matrix peak: "'I em nouthing,' Jean Baudrillard informed me, throwing his hands into the air in emphatic accompaniment. Thousands would disagree. Currently France's most successful intellectual export, this retired sociologist turned philosopher causes a stir wherever he goes. Last year, tickets to hear him expound his philosophy of disappearance at the Institute of Contemporary Arts were like gold dust. Hundreds of fans queued in vain for returns, and one distraught young man threatened to kill himself if he was not let in. A few weeks ago, after a whirlwind tour of Brazil, Baudrillard returned to the ICA to kick off its 'Big Thinkers' talks which sold out in four hours flat."

In a 2005 reading at New York's Tilton Gallery, richly described by The New Yorker's Larissa MacFarquhar, Baudrillard told the ultrahip art crowd that simulation's suffusion of art throughout the culture has destroyed its transcendent quality and is "the very end of art."[10] MacFarquhar summed up succinctly his US tour: "he is still going about his usual French Philosopher business, scandalizing audiences with the grandiloquent sweep of his gnomic pronouncements and post-Marxian pessimism." Asked for information about himself after the Tilton Gallery lecture, he declared: "I am a simulacrum of myself." Commentators pose or imply the question: "Is he for

real?" Only his ardent followers and severe critics are sure they know.

Many obit heads played humorously on the simulation theme: "Baudrillard's simulacrum died"; "The Shadow of His Former Self";"Has this Man Really Died?";"Reality claims Gallic Provocateur"; "Reports of Jean Baudrillard's Death are Somewhat Exaggerated"; and "Kept a Sharp Eye on Blurry Reality." Reuters (2007) held that he had "a mordant sense of humor," and more than one commentator called him a "philosopher clown." Reporting the nearly simultaneous passing of Baudrillard and the cartoon character "Captain America," The Daily Telegraph's head read: "One of These Comic Heros is Really Dead" (Leith 2007). Baudrillard's penchant for ironic, hyperbolic one-liners was the bane of humorless interviewers,[11] but his genial, lighthearted, unpretentious ways won over most interlocutors. Professing love for and fascination with America, he saved some of his best comedic lines for the narratives about his travels here; Disneyland is the "real" America," California is the "absolute simulacrum," and the US is an "(un)culture"and "the only remaining primitive society."[12] His call to resist simulation's oppressive cultural control system by practicing greater "indifference" than our "silent majorities" was also a howler.[13]

However, Baudrillard's view of the US as a banal, obscene "utopia achieved" was not really tongue-in-cheek and surely not universally appreciated.[14] A few obits mentioned his attack on Susan Sontag's charitable intentions, during the Bosnian War, which led her to countercharge that he was "a political idiot," possibly a "moral idiot," and surely "ignorant and cynical."[15] Other activist critics have posed similar charges about his advocacy of indifference. Several obits admonished him for his controversial views about war, 9/11, and globalization.[16] Reuters'(2007) said that his The Gulf War Did Not Take Place (1995) typified his "provocative, paradoxical style" and that his 9/11 views displayed "a lack of sympathy for the victims." The Times (2007) of London said that his Gulf War book illustrated "the virtualization of western culture," but called the work "notorious." Many critics saw his views on such matters to be insightful, but in poor taste. By contrast, supporters insist that his bitingly ironic style was the secret of his critical edge.

Slate declared that "Baudrillard's grotesque allure" was "his willingness to go to an inhumane extreme to make a surgical strike on your consciousness," but that this tendency made his work hard to grasp. "To quote him is to misquote him": said Slate (Agger 2007). Others have described his works as "obscure," "fragmented," "dense" "illusive," or even "meaningless." By contrast, Baudrillardians usually have held that his difficult, often impenetrable style was the chief vehicle for his creativity and insight. Chris Turner (2007) repeated one of his oft quoted lines: "the world was given to us as enigmatic and unintelligible, and the task of thought is to make it, if possible, even more enigmatic and unintelligible." Like early twentieth century avant-garde artists and literary modernists, Turner argued, Baudrillard employed enigma with the intent of radically transforming art and politics. Turner implied that his works had the desired effect in some circles. Arthur Kroker (2007) spoke glowingly of how Baudrillard "made thought itself a faithful illusion of the sorcery of hyperreality." He claimed that Baudrillard's "cultural theory of simulation ran parallel to the great scientific discoveries of our time..."and that the philosopher laid bare "the secret of reality itself." By "refusing to be simply culturally mimetic," he argued, Baudrillard "actually became a complex sign of the social reality of the postmodern century."

Science-oriented critics also contended that Baudrillard was a prime representative of the "postmodern" moment, but they equated his work and "postmodernism" overall with rank irrationalism. In their view, he was the prototype "postmodernist" relativist - as exposed in the "science wars" ignited by the Social Text affair.[17] The Los Angeles Times quoted scientists, Alan Sokal's and John Bricmont's gibe - "Baudrillard's texts seem unintelligible" because "they mean precisely nothing."[18] The two physicists contended that his abuse of scientific concepts, frequent employment of neologisms and unsupported generalizations, and carefree attitude about details epitomize "postmodernism's" "fashionable nonsense" and "intellectual quackery." Other critics charged that this "seductive unreason," combined with his "political fatalism," feeds "reactionary" cultural and political currents (Wolin 2004, p. 306). Back-to-back Amazon.com reviews of his Baudrillard's Gulf War book typify the extremely polarized opinions about his work: "profound error and transcendent stupidity, the most inane ever reviewed" versus a "brilliant" piece of "pure sociological poetry." The Economist (2007) obit said that his ideas may be "utter nonsense" or "profound critique," but, in either case, they are provocative. His ardent critics and followers agree that, for better or worse, his ideas subvert western beliefs in science, rationality, and truth.

Theorists associated with the journal Telos were among the first thinkers in North America to engage Baudrillard's theories. Telos Press published the first English translations of his books -Mirror of Production ([1972] 1975) and For a Political Economy of the Sign ([1973] 1981). In these works, Baudrillard attacked Marx's labor theory of value and materialism and framed an alternative cultural theory, stressing symbolic exchange and sign-

value. He undercut Marx's and the Hegelian left's "historicist" method of immanent criticism, or ideology critique.[19] This decisive move was the basis for Baudrillard's apocalyptic, declinest "end of ideology" and "end of history" arguments, which pervade and constitute the core thrust of his mature work.[20] Also, seeking alternatives to Marxism and the postwar left, Telos revived the Frankfurt School's deeply pessimistic "dialectic of Enlightenment" and "one-dimensionality" arguments, which also departed left historicism, drew heavily from Nietzsche and other critics of Enlightenment, and saw mid-twentieth century, liberal democracies to be "totally administered societies." In a nutshell, they argued that the historical resources for critique and emancipation had been neutralized by mass culture and mass politics. The Telos circle engaged these earlier views, but stressed that the quiescent state of late-1970s, U.S. politics derived from the left's integration into welfare state and consequent illusion that the system was responsive to criticism (making it all the more resistant to political transformation). Although concurring that the left was moribund, Baudrillard portrayed a much more fundamental exhaustion; evaporation of the cultural bases of reciprocal, meaningful exchanges between interlocutors and annihilation of the media needed to inform a deliberative democratic citizenry. In the books published by Telos Press, he substituted a "simulation model" for the democratic left's and modern social theory's communication model; he held that semiotic codes homogenize and regiment so thoroughly that they preclude delivery and reception of the types of information necessary for collective agency and genuinely democratic politics.[21]

English translations of Baudrillard's more emphatically "postmodernist" works, which elaborated the ideas of simulation and hyperreality and did not look back to Marx and to critical theory, were published while Thatcherism and Reaganism flourished and left-liberal politics seemed moribund. His Simulations (1983a), In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities (1983b), and The Ecstasy of Communication (1988) were much more widely read and debated than the texts published by Telos Press. He argued that simulation, or the capacity to create identical copies from models, turns culture into a flat surface, radically homogenizes and dehistoricizes it, and neutralizes critical distance, or the capacity to stand back, evaluate, and criticize; face pressed against the screen, "seduction" and "fascination" rule. Baudrillard held that simulation "pushes us... close to psychosis"and that only "indifference," or a refusal of meaning, could upset the symbolic exchange process that animates the simulation system.[22] At the end of the 1980s, he declared that the world was in "anorexic ruins" and that: "everything that was swept away in '68 is now restored..."(Baudrillard 1989:43). His extreme, digital version of one-dimensionality universalized the wrecked hopes of '68ers and resonated with dystopian themes in the popular culture of that time (expressed classically in Blade Runner) and in new versions of end of ideology discourses (e.g., "end of history," end of left and right," "end of alternatives"), which proliferated in the later 1980s and early 1990s. However, Baudrillard's tone was not one of panic, but suggested the attitude of a relatively untroubled, fascinated bystander. He ranged widely and speculated philosophically, during the1990s, but did not reverse his "postmodernist" course.[23]

During Baudrillard's later years, globalization supplanted postmodernism as the big transdisciplinary discourse and battles over it suffused the public sphere. Francis Fukuyama's and Thomas L. Friedman's bestsellers, advocating neoliberal globalization, implied that the process revived modernization by relieving capitalism of its burdensome postwar, social democratic baggage and making it more vibrant, efficient, and expansive.[24] Neoliberals held that Reagan era, U.S. economic restructuring ignited globalization; it brought down regulatory barriers to free trade, stemmed the postwar socialist tide, and advanced freedom, growth, and progress. They also held that Reagan's military build-up won the Cold War, opening the world to free-market capitalism and making the US the globalization system's lone superpower or "benign hegemon." American leadership in the first Gulf War, President Clinton's embrace of neoliberal globalization, and the roaring '90s stock market seemed to realize the economic and geopolitical hopes of Reaganism.

Contra neoliberalism, Baudrillard saw US-led globalization to be a "reversion of history" that radically intensified and extended cultural homogenization, produced major fragmentation and dislocation, and generated profound resentment of American power. Countering left-leaning critics, who advocated opposing or regulating the process, he argued that the "antiglobalization movement" and "positive alternatives" can neither reform globalization nor slow its liquidation of particularity. He contended that only "singularities,"or one-time (i.e., "incomparable, irreducible, inexchangeable") "events" can upset cultural homogenization's logic of equivalence, and, thus, undermine globalization.[25] Although not all singularities are violent, he explained, terrorism is an "insurrectionary singularity" that inheres in globalization and threatens the process.[26] Baudrillard called 9/11 a "irreducible singularity" and "mother of all events," signifying Americans being "overtaken by their own power." He argued that 9/11's disruptive force did not derive from the violence per se, but from its "symbolic violence"; the strikes on the Twin Towers and

Pentagon, chief symbols of American economic and geopolitical power, humiliated the United States and exposed its vulnerability.[27] His assertion that the attacks were a response to "insufferable," U.S. hyperpower led to charges that he justified terrorism, which he vigorously denied. Still his argument that terrorism resists homogenization and globalization processes and that it could unravel them and the entire simulation system implies, at least, indirect sympathy for the attackers' aims.[28] "After history," Baudrillard declared, "ruptural events," like 9/11, "appear no longer the bearers of constructive disorder, but of absolute disorder."[29] In his view, terrorism reintroduces negativity, but promises only disintegration of western modernity and its Enlightenment ideals, not revolutionary progress. However, Baudrillard implied that a new order based on premodern, symbolic exchange and myth, which he preferred, could arise spontaneously from the cultural wreckage.[30]

Baudrillard's emphasis on profound political and cultural exhaustion pervades his views of globalization, terror, and 9/11 and is the leitmotif of his overall corpus. He declared himself to be a Nietzschean, but his vision of radically flattened hyperreality precludes Nietzsche's hopes for aesthetic transcendence, creation of new values, and sovereign individuals.[31] If the scenario of a self-reproducing, all-dominating simulation system is truly the "reality" of our time then Kroker's claim that Baudrillard "completed Nietzsche" might be plausible.[32] However, more likely, he recycled and extended imaginatively, Heidegger's claims about total technological domination and consequent cultural homogenization and dehumanization. Its not surprising that the Baudrillardian, Kroker saw "Heidegger to be the theorist par excellence of the digital future"; he might have detected this theme, which seems hard to miss, to be a subtext of Baudrillard's works.[33] Heidegger's argument about a "darkening of the world"- sweeping cultural exhaustion and loss of collective agency, driven by technological rationalization - was so extreme that it made a mockery of liberal democracy and, arguably, helped create the cultural and political climate for Weimar-era "revolution from the right" and fascism. Although delivered in a mild-mannered and often jocular tone, Baudrillard's argument about postmodern homogenization-regimentation suggests even more profound exhaustion, completely barren of historical resources for change. He was dismissive of the liberal-democratic legal, political, and cultural institutions that he took-for-granted in everyday affairs and that made his work and good life possible.[34] What is left for us if we accept his assertion that we live in a world order "exclusive of all ideology" and, consequently, where "all the objectives of the Enlightenment are lost"(Baudrillard 2006b:8)? Should we "abandon all hope?" Baudrillard's antihistoricism, tacit antiliberalism, and stress on fascination and mythology have highly ambiguous political directions and may have, as some critics argue, an affinity for reactionary tendencies. Regardless, his anti-Enlightenment views lose critical force in the face of the nearly worldwide wave of culturally repressive and violent fundamentalism and neopopulism, which he cautioned us not to berate, less we ignore their role as "singularities."

Many commentators charge or imply that Baudrillard was a bullshit artist. Philosopher, Harry G. Frankfurt holds that "bullshit" is unavoidable, when we hold forth on matters that we know little or nothing about and that the consequent gap between "opinion" and "apprehension of reality" is "relatively" more common today than before.[35] Indeed, he implies that "bullshit" suffuses our public discourses today. Frankfurt argues that "bullshitters," by contrast to liars, do not try to conceal "truths," but they improvise, color, and expound without constraint. He says that "bullshitters" may, by chance or intuition, occasionally get things right, but, because they put aside the "authority of truth" completely, they are ultimately its greater enemy.[36] Frankfurt holds that they act as if they know, when they don't know at all; they hide the fact that they are totally unconcerned with the "truth-values" of what they say.[37] Baudrillard did not dissemble in this way! His often humorous, transparently hyperbolic claims, and playful admission, at some points, that his ideas are bullshit suggest an ironic "story-teller," who entertains and unveils, rather than "bullshits." Good story-tellers often generate moral and emotional distance, allowing us to see things in a different, problematic light. Some commentators claim that Baudrillard did just that.

However, Frankfurt also contends that the "deeper sources" of today's "proliferation of bullshit" are "'antirealist' doctrines," which deny "objective realities" so decisively that they discourage diligent, honest inquiry and speech in matters that call for close attention and prudence (e.g., climate change) (Frankfurt 2004:64-5). If we accept this view, then Baudrillard must have encouraged "bullshitting," even if he did not regularly practice it. He and other "academic," radical epistemic relativists likely have fueled and legitimated, at least, in some circles, the profusion of "bullshit" and consequent irresponsibility and failure to face realities, problems, and crises. Still their ideas are primarily manifestations of the "bullshit" problem, not chief causes of it. Critics' claims about the grave cultural damages inflicted by "postmodernists" overstate their reach. Better situated talking heads, pundits, PR people in the political and business classes, religious and political leaders, and others, who honed their "bullshitting" skills in the heat of big public battles over material and ideal interests, have been much more active, influential purveyors of

"bullshit." And these individuals were the main targets of Frankfurt's little broadside. They did not need Baudrillard or any philosophical props to operate, and the ones who sought legitimation often borrowed from Bloom and other defenders of the Truth. Yet radical perspectivists and absolutists feed off each other, and together manifest the cultural crisis Baudrillard is a sign of.

The prevalence of PR, political spin, and tabloid news seemed to be in rapid ascent in the 1980s, when the convergence of ideological, political, regulatory, and technical changes opened the way for the profusion of "bullshit." Baudrillard saw the Reagan Presidency to be a watershed moment; he held that President Reagan personified the hyperreal California heartland, where the line between the media and rest of culture had been elided. Baudrillard stated that: "In the image of Reagan, the whole of America has become Californian. Ex-actor and ex-governor that he is, he has worked up his euphoric, cinematic, extraverted, advertising version of artificial paradises of the West to all American dimensions" (Baudrillard 1989b:108). Baudrillard's views do not seem all that hyperbolic in light of Reagan's occasional confusion of cinematic events with actual ones and his other gaffs, such as his declaration, in a 1984 presidential debate with former Vice President Mondale, that he would share Strategic Defense Initiative (Star Wars) technologies with the USSR.[38] His plan for the United States to spend many billions of dollars on SDI technology and then give it to the regime that he called the "evil empire" seemed to be an absurd proposal, but it stirred little controversy. The headline-grabbing phrase in presidential politics that year was Mondale's earlier use of a Wendy's Hamburger advertisement - "Where's the beef?" - to belittle presidential primary, candidate Senator Gary Hart, who was later done-in by very well-publicized tabloid stories about his affair with Donna Rice.[39] How Baudrillardian! President Reagan's problematic moments did not derail his re-election, or upset the vision of him as the "Great Communicator." When the mainstream press noted his gaffs, they treated them in a humorous way that did not question his capacity to act as the "leader of the free world" and keeper of SDI technology.[40]

The media has not been quite as kind to presidents that came after Reagan and after the inception of Internet and suffusion of all-day tabloid "news" and talk radio. In the various camps, Rove-like figures design and command virtual wars that would make Neo shutter. The media spectacle surrounding Monicagate and the swift boat battles contain vintage Baudrillardian moments. President Bush posing in pilot's gear and speechifying about the end of major combat in Iraq, on the deck of the USS Abraham Lincoln, is an iconic image that has generated much backwash. Failing to learn from Bush's debacle, John Kerry saluted, played soldier, and "reported for duty" at the Democratic Convention and later drowned in the backwash. These types of virtual events with real consequences crossed my mind while writing this essay - the print and TV images of the bogus claims about WMDs and Saddam's involvement in 9/11, Jessica Lynch and Pat Tillman hoaxes, cropped videos of the toppling of Saddam's statue, blatant lies about torture and rendition, Alberto Gonzales' poor memory, ad infinitum. An obit writer said that Baudrillard employed "rhetorical exaggeration" to "engage with the real world" critically.[41] Another obit writer asserted that: "The 1990 Gulf war was modeled by planners using simulations; it was won, if we call a massacre a victory, largely by pilots looking at computer screens; and it was relayed to the public by television. Most consumers of these images get no reality check; the image is all we have to go on. And the image does not come to us innocently" (Blackburn 2007). Baudrillard draws attention to the rampant political spin, obsession with celebrity, and eroded line between entertainment, news, politics, and life.[42] Even if "postmodern," media culture is not always realer than real, his ideas still bring it into view and stir critical thought about its qualities and profusion.

Generous readers and interpreters of Baudrillard imply that his extreme moves generate the critical distance that he held had been evaporated by the anesthetized, entertainment and media stupor that he described so richly. They imply that he alerts us to suffusion of "bullshit," and exposes the mechanisms that deliver it. Others say that Baudrillard sensitizes us to the creative possibilities of digital technologies and new media, and inspires fresh work in the arts and popular culture, which belies his claims about the end of art. But these views can be turned round by critics, who assert that his indifference, hyperbole, and careless ways affirm the neutralized critical sensibilities and political torpor that he also portrayed so well and seemed to celebrate. Others charge that his anti-Enlightenment views feed reactionary sensibilities. Still others contend that his hyperbolic claims illuminate the most media-thick and entertainment-thick public spheres, but cast a shadow over the rest of culture and hide the animate social worlds extending beyond the simulated ones. Perhaps his totalizing argument about hyperreality is a self-referential reflection of his celebrity that constricts his vision, but, focusing it narrowly, provides a productive one-sidedness. And maybe all these divergent perspectives about the philosopher have some veracity.

Like Nietzsche, Baudrillard did not seem troubled about his contradictions and likely thought, in Nietzschean fashion, that they catch attention, provoke rumination, and, thereby, are indeed productive. Many commentators

portray him as a provocateur; an accurate characterization I believe. However, Kroker's claim that Baudrillard was "a complex sign of the social reality" of his times might be an even better way to remember him - a multisided, imaginative, and free-wheeling thinker, who mirrored his "postmodern" moment's creative forces and contradictions and pointed beyond them to the next historical conjuncture when the bullet hits the bone.

Endnotes

1. Asked about postmodernism, Baudrillard said: "I have nothing to do with it. I don't know who came up with the term... But I have no faith in 'postmodernism' as an analytical term. When people say: 'you are a postmodernist,' I answer: "Well why not?' The term simply avoids the issue itself." He declared that he was a "nihilist, not a postmodernist." (Baudrillard and Lie 2007:3-4). However, he had earlier defined "postmodernism," employed the concept, and implied that he was "postmodernist" (e.g., Baudrillard 1989a).

2. See Donadio 2007, for a retrospective on the culture wars in the wake of Bloom's intervention.

3. One British survey asked more than 20,000 people to rank one-hundred leading public intellectuals; Baudrillard placed twenty-second (lodged between Francis Fukuyama and Slavoj Zizek) (Herman 2005). In my search of The New York Times electronic archives (1981-August 2007), Baudrillard appeared in 79 articles.

4. Young Baudrillard was influenced by Henri Lefebvre, Roland Barthes, Guy Debord and the Situationalist International and other left-leaning thinkers, beginning to entertain new forms of cultural expression, control, critique, and resistence. See Kellner 1989; 2005a; 2005b; 2006; 2007 for comprehensive analyses of Baudrillard's thought in its various phases and contexts.

5. Bloom argued that later twentieth century, American leftists found Marx "boring," switching allegiance, via the new French cultural theories, to Nietzsche and Heidegger (with a significant infusion of Freud and Weber). He held that this shift magnified the cultural relativism and anti-Western themes already prominent in Marxism. See Bloom 1987, pp. 38-39, 141-56, 194-97, 217-26, 374-82.

6. See Wolin 1990; 2004, for parallel left-liberal criticism, stressing the Nietzsche-Heidegger fusion. Other left-liberal thinkers, like Todd Gitlin (1995), blamed "postmodernism" and the type of left-wing, identity politics that it allegedly justified for providing ammunition to Bloom and others, who helped engineer the neoconservative right-turn.

7. Lie in Baudrillard and Lie (2007:1).

8. The character, Neo, discovers that reality is an illusion and leads battles against the artificial intelligence, or machines, that created the virtual world and exploited humans as a power source.

9. By contrast, The Matrix's Neo and his allies lay bare the grim reality beneath the virtual world, and discover that it is planned and governed rationally by repressive conspirators. While Baudrillard argued emphatically that active resistance only fortifies hyperreality, Neo and friends waged a good war against the machines and their virtual reality. See Baudrillard 2004a.

10. MacFarquhar (2005) said: "The audience was too big for the room - some people had to stand. A tall, Nico-esque blond woman in a shiny white raincoat leaned against the mantelpiece, next to a tall man with chest-length dreadlocks. A middle-aged woman with read-and-purple hair sat nearby. There was a brief opening act: Arto Lindsey, the one-time Lounge Lizard, whose broad forehead, seventies style eyeglasses, and sturdy teeth seemed precariously supported by his reedy frame, played a thunderous cadenza on a pale-blue electric guitar." Baudrillard (e.g., 1983a: 150-52) framed his ideas about the end of art decades before this gathering.

11. Baudrillard was unflappable while answering New York Times notoriously, sarcastic Deborah Solomon's (2005) questions: "Are you saying that America Represents the ideal democracy?"; "So you don't think that the US invaded Iraq to spread freedom?"; "Isn't that kind of simplistic reasoning why people get so tired of French Intellectuals?" Baudrillard answered, straight-faced in short, cutting, ironic phrases. The tongue-in-cheek facets of Baudrillard's comments are, in some ways, reminiscent (although less sarcastic) of young Bob Dylan's famous exchanges with naive, overly eager reporters or baseball announcer, Joe Garagiola's (who was standing in for Johnny Carson) hilarious exchange with guests, John Lennon and Paul McCartney.

12. Baudrillard 1983a, pp. 24-6; 1989, pp. 7, 126, 128.

13. Baudrillard held that "hyperconformist simulation" is the only way to resist the simulation system. See Baudrillard 1983b, pp. 12-14, 41-61, 95-110; 1988, pp. 97-101.

14. Baudrillard (1989b:27-9) said: "I ask of the Americans only that they be Americans. I do not ask them to be intelligent, sensible, original." In his view, we live entirely on the surface, without reflection, subtlety, nuance, or wile, providing the outside observer "the opportunity to be so brutally naive." He held that Americans "are themselves simulation

in its most developed state," and, lacking depth, we are completely unaware of the process and condition. However, Baudrillard also quipped that France was merely "a copy with subtitles"(quoted in Harkin 2007).

15. Sontag was responding to Baudrillard's sharply critical comments about her directing Beckett's Waiting For Godot in Sarajevo, while it was under bombardment by the Serbs. He criticized her "condescending manner," and implied that she served the imperial aspirations of George H.W. Bush's "New World Order"(Baudrillard 1994b; Coulter 2005; Chan 2001).

16. For a highly critical perspective on Baudrillard's views of the US and on 9/11, see Wolin 2002; 2004: 301-06.

17. The "science wars" followed in the wake of the publication (in the cultural studies journal, Social Text) of Alan Sokal's hilarious, totally bogus, postmodern physics article, rife with "postmodernist" jargon and genuflections to famous "postmodernist" theorists. The editors apparently took the parody seriously and accepted it without review by science-competent referees. By contrast to Allan Bloom, Sokal (1996) identified himself as a leftist and feminist and "on the same side as the Social Text editors." However, he thought that "postmodernist," cultural studies was bankrupt intellectually and an unhelpful distraction politically. For numerous links to materials from the international debate following this affair go to http://physics.nyu.edu/~as2/.

18. Woo (2007) quotes from Sokal and Bricmont, Fashionable Nonsense (1998), which addresses the Social Text affair and alleged postmodernist "abuse of science."

19. Marx claimed that "socially necessary labor time," hidden beneath the surface of fluctuating prices, determines the ratios by which commodities exchange and that extraction by means of the unequal wage relationship between labor and capital, obscured by liberalism's claims about voluntary contracts and supply and demand, is the basis of capitalist accumulation. Baudrillard rejected Marx's "labor theory of value"and all other "depth models," which see the cultural surface of signifiers and images to be an ideological distortion of "real" determinants or operant forces "below," which can be laid bare by scientific inquiry and ideology critique. Beaudrillard's argument that "postmodern" culture neutralizes the social bases of these methods is at the heart of his one-dimensionality thesis and simulation model. Overall, Marx and his followers contended that emancipatory possibilities are nestled within capitalist modernization and refracted in liberal-democratic ideology. Holding that capitalist inequality and oppression contradict the promises of equality, freedom, and plenty, Marx and his fellow travelers identified new structural and cultural conditions and possibilities that favored realization of universalized, radicalized versions of liberal ideals and pointed to an emergent collective agent, the revolutionary working class, that they hoped would make the radicalized ideals governing norms. Liberal-democratic and social democratic modernization theories offer parallel nonrevolutionary accounts of modern capitalist development containing seeds of progress and fresh means to refine and advance democratic institutions (more gradually realized through immanent critique, collective action, and planning).

20. Baudrillard claimed to reject apocalyptic perspectives, but his vision of exceptional cultural and political exhaustion of liberal-democratic culture suggests just such an approach.

21. By contrast to Baudrillard, the Telos circle's critique of the American left's "artificial negativity" was animated by their search for "organic negativity,"or new sources of collective action and radical politics. However, their theoretical moves, like that of the Baudrillard, had ambiguous, contradictory, political directions.

22. Baudrillard (1983a:109, 152) said that "the order of signifieds" becomes "the play of infinitesimal signifiers, reduced to their aleatory commutation. All transcendent finalities reduced to a dashboard full of instruments." He said the flow of signs induces "schizophrenic vertigo."

23. See Baudrillard 2002a, for essays that express the directions of his 1990s thought.

24. See Fukuyama 1992; Friedman 2000.

25. Baudrillard (1989:41) had earlier argued that the "postmodern" moment was devoid of "events," but that "surprise" could come from "a new event" impossible to anticipate on the basis of earlier history. Later, he claimed that 9/11 was just such an event.

26. Baudrillard (2003:4) held that: "...singularities are neither negative nor positive... Singularities are not alternatives. They represent a different symbolic order. They do not abide by value judgments or political realities. They can be the best or the worst. They cannot be 'regularized' by means of a collective historical action." He added that: "The singularity of terrorism avenges the singularities of those cultures that paid the price of the imposition of a unique power with their own extinction."

27. Baudrillard claimed that the "abject and pornographic" images of the Abu Garib torture had the same, albeit self-inflicted, humiliating impact. His arguments here are rooted in his ideas about symbolic exchange, which he first developed in earlier works. Baudrillard's conception of exchange is based on his engagement with theories about its premodern forms, which valorized the ability "to give back.." See Baudrillard 2001a; 2003; Kellner 2005a. Moreover, Baudrillard first formulated his view of terrorism more than twenty years before 9/11. He held that the World Trade Center's Twin Towers were the "visible sign of the closure of the system," but that random, senseless terrorism escapes this control and poses a major threat

to established power. His prescient moments puzzled his critics. See Baudrillard 1983a:135-38; 1983b:48-58.

28. Although holding, from the start, that singularities are neither good nor bad, Baudrillard warned critics not to "berate" ethnic, religious, or individual outbursts against globalization and its supporters as "simply populist, archaic, or even terrorist." He said that such "events" are now "engaged against the abstract universality of the global" (Baudrillard 2003:4).

29. See Baudrillard 2005:8;

30. On themes discussed in the above paragraph, see, Baudrillard 1994c; 2001b; 2002b; 2003; 2004b; 2005; 2006a; 2006b; 2007; Coulter 2004; Kellner 2005b.

31. Nietzsche criticized nihilism, while Baudrillard embraced it. Nietzsche declared that modernity was on the verge of collapse, but he contended that the "good European's" nascent hybridity contained seeds of a new culture and new types of humanity and that a "new order of rank," or life-affirming values could be created by nascent autonomous individuals, who share a creative "will to power," multiperspectival vision, and rich aesthetic sensibilities.

32. Nietzsche did not anticipate these conditions, and they would require new theories.

33. Kroker 2002, p. 1. See Kroker 2004, for more on his views about Heidegger. Baudrillard's arguments about globalization, terror, and, more generally, virtual reality, all stress complete "submission" to technology and total "dependence" on it. The Heideggerian influence on Baudrillard is obvious in his employment of Heidegger's terminology; e.g. that "technological 'enframing'" has instituted total control over the world (Baudrillard 2006b:6). Imported to France in the mid-1950s, Heidegger's (e.g., 1977) ideas about technology and homogenization were engaged seriously by the older generation of poststructuralists and were passed on to their students. Moreover, they often engaged Nietzsche's thought via Heidegger.

34. Seeing Enlightenment "juridical and moral superstructure" to be moribund, Baudrillard casually dismissed "human rights" as an "alibi" and "advertising" (2004b:7). He declared that, today, "the concepts of liberty, democracy, and human rights look awful" (2003:3). Similar comments about the exhaustion of democratic culture are spread throughout his works.

35. Frankfurt's On Bullshit (2006) was first published in 1986 as a journal article, while the writer was professing philosophy at Yale. The republication twenty years later as a slim 67 page text had a Baudrillardian twist. Frankfurt was interviewed on The Daily Show and 60 Minutes, discussed on the Blogs and in newspapers, and rose near the top of The New York Times bestseller list. For a brief moment, the philosopher became a celebrity scholar. See Frankfurt's interview about Jon Stewart's and Stephen Colbert's outing of "bullshitters" by ridiculing them (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-7IW8CxgXY).

36. Frankfurt does not imply the Platonic variety of Truths, or absolutes, but the conditional types of warranted knowledge about the world, which we seek in honestly practiced science and in mindful everyday thought and practice, geared to inform or direct prudent action of all sorts. This type of knowledge is based on inquiry, and is open to question, pragmatic tests, and revision. Platonic absolutes are not subject to inquiry, and bullshit puts aside inquiry.

37. See Frankfurt 2005:55, 61-7.

38. President Reagan was responding, at least indirectly, to critics, who argued that the Soviet leadership would have been so deeply threatened by the US's defensive missile shield and consequent end of of nuclear parity that they would have been tempted to launch a pre-emptive nuclear attack just prior to the new technology's implementation.

39. The historic photo of the good Senator Hart seaside with Donna Rice on his lap was and iconic image that ranks with Bill Clinton's famous Monica hug.

40. The events concerning Reagan, Mondale, and Hart took place between March and October of 1984. See Baudrillard 1989b:113-4, for speculation about why Reagan's gaffs did not incur political costs.

41. He added that conventional philosophers languished in irrelevant abstraction (Harkin 2007).

42. Even Baudrillard's anti-Enlightenment themes, provoke critical thought - (i.e., they raise questions about the use of liberal ideals to justify employment of massive force and the consequent deaths, injuries, dislocation, and general devastation that follow).

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Lies and Life: The Other Italians

Charles Lemert

From Vico to Gramsci—not to mention Croce, Pareto, and Mosca—Italy has been always close to the heart of modern social theory. If one were to stretch the point to include Augustine of Hippo's formative years in Milan, one might even say that the seeds of critical social theory as it came to be were planted in Augustine's City of God which was in effect, if not design, a transcendental critical theory of Rome's collapse before Alaric's invasion in 410 C.E.

Wherever one locates the origins of Italian social thought it would be hard to deny that Gramsci, in particular, is the principal figure in the modern era. Prison Notebooks ranks as a masterwork of critical theory and a work well ahead of its time (arguably more subtle, if less systematic, than the early writings of Adorno and Horkheimer). At the very least, the notebooks did more, and did it earlier, to lay down the working principles of a comprehensive outline of the cultural crisis of the modern State than even the parallel movement in Germany. Not only that, but Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemonies was a precursor of Althusser's famous essay on the cultural effects of State power and, at the least a marker on the way to, if not a direct source of, Foucault's later theories of biopower and governmentality. More recently, Hardt and Negri's Empire, while of mixed Italian heritage, calls attention to the value of Gramsci's thinking in the renewal of Italian social theory upon its foundational ties to the younger Marx's revision of left Hegelianism. The, to me, inexplicable success of Empire goes mostly to demonstrate the greater originality of Gramsci's ideas. Where Gramsci was careful (a care required to confound his prison censors), Hardt and Negri are breathtakingly careless in their silly misappropriations of Foucault and Deleuze.

Still, it is good that attention has turned to the Italian traditions which, if we are to be fully serious about them, requires the study of two who by the refinements of their expositions represent the Italian way in a fashion reminiscent of Gramsci's. These, then, are the other Italians—Umberto Eco and Giorgio Agamben. Perhaps because, like Vico before them, both Eco and Agamben started out as medievalists (which is to say, classicists), their writings are fraught with riddles. It should be said, however, that like Gramsci, whose writings were necessarily over-coded, their mystery stories are meant to be solved. Then too where they are inscrutable it is less painfully for irony's sake, as in the earlier writings of Derrida and the two great books of Deleuze and Guattari. Eco and Agamben incline toward the mysterious and do so not for their own religious purposes but because of the religious questions intrinsic to medieval thought and culture; in particular, they address two of the most inscrutable mysteries of the boundaries between the human and the nature—mysteries, whether theological or existential, all humankind must confront: lies and life. How are we to live if things are as they seem or as they are said to be? Do we have any real alternative but to pick from the forbidden tree of knowledge at the cost of our idealize nature?

In A Theory of Semiotics (1979), Eco makes the remarkable observation that "every time there is signification there is the possibility of lying." More fully, Eco states (58-59):

> Every time there is [the] possibility of lying, there is a sign-function: which is to signify (and then to communicate) something to which no real state of things corresponds. A theory of codes must study everything that can be used to lie.

One clue as to what he is driving at is in the title of the 1968 Italian edition of Theory of Semiotics: La struttura assente (The absent structure) which of course is a reference to Ferdinand de Saussure's classical statement of the elements of semiology. The structures of all signifying systems, including spoken languages, are organized not upon the correspondence between signs and things in the world but in a social contract by which the effective communication of meanings depends on an absent structure in the form of any given system of signs and rules

governing their use. The color red associated with traffic systems depends on the competent understanding of green and, in most instances, yellow. Some may trust that the red light expresses a danger ahead, but the system itself is, as Saussure put it, arbitrary in the sense that whatever a culture may associate with red, green has no necessarily relation to safety. Stop/go constitute in elemental social agreement as to movement in traffic of all kinds—a system articulated by means of lights or signs of other kinds that to the sober express what is actually a fine-tuned, crucial rule concerning the right or wisdom of moving in a certain direction. The directive is not in the real world, but the system itself such that you might say that red or stop is the absence-of-green, hence: not-go. Both cannot be meaningfully lit at once.

Though Eco's book was meant as a technical theory of sign-functions or semiotics, the theory, embedded as it is in Saussurian linguistics, has far ranging implications to the current situation. For one, Eco picks up the implications of Saussure's distinction between parole/langue—speech/language—which stands behind the more contemporary distinction message/code or practice/competence. Parole/langue invites the conclusion that communicative performance draw upon the absent-to-the-performance competences which are the contents of the absent structures—and by extension stand behind any and all dynamic theories of the relation of praxis to theory. Contrary to the common practice of setting agencies as somehow at odds with structures, meaningful actions of all kinds are always and of necessity engaged with structures which are, as Giddens has put it, resources for as much as they restrictions on actions. The association, if not direct link, to Gramsci's nuanced idea of praxis as always distorted—yet, still able to revolutionize the world through and after deep reflection on limits of praxis. The link, more direct, to Marx's theory of human value articulated against the mode of production that also constrains human labor is more apparent—and, by the way, one of the unsolved problems among those who would understand the sources of Saussurian linguistics which are, at once (but unglossed), Durkheim and Marx. On the same point, Eco does, and aptly, refer to Vico whoseScienza Nuova (1725-1730) includes the idea, as Eco puts it (254), that "languages rise as poetic inventions and are only accepted by convention afterward." Performance is the resource of competence.

Eco's theory of lies applies, however, to very much more than a technical theory of codes and meanings. In one aspect, one can draw from Eco a strong theory that helps to reframe the debate among rival theorists of culture. To what extent are socially composed cultures appropriated for use in the systematic distortions offered in the guise of truth-telling—as, for an example (also found in Gramsci's essay on Americanism), liberal modernity's cult of individualism and free-markets as the bluff meant to cover the empty hand dealt by capitalism's furtively systematic exploitations of technically free labor? Can there ever be a robust theory of cultural meanings without a theory of lies?

In another aspect, a theory of lies can lead to an equally strong theory of all forms of human-life practices. How else does it happen that lives are lived in the short-run of practical needs and wants when, in the long-run, actions are justified by appeals to realities that cannot be as they are represented? Real structures, absent though they are, are by their nature distortions of the realities they impose. If so, then is it not the freedom of actors to lie in respect to their motivations—and to lie as much to themselves as to others (and especially to those in structured authority)—that is the indispensable tactic in what possibilities there might be for change. Communication in its broadest sense is a coming to terms with the possibility of lying in order to contend with, get around, survive, and resist the false realities imposed by hegemonic orders. Our truth-telling, such as it is, is always without exception at least a lie of omission and, in crucial political instances, a sin of commission. The intentions we (s'il y en un) profess in practical, short-run actions is a poetics of the situation at hand that (like Gramsci's prison writings) are over-coded in the face of censors and police of all kinds—a reach beyond the truth of things at hand based on the practical wisdom that social things imposed are by their nature distorted—that is, are down-right lies in and of themselves. In a word, lies are necessary to life. Those who imbibe unflinchingly the structurally sanctioned truth-tellings of, say, the State are condemned to live as machines. The genius of children is in their wisdom that their independence from parental authority requires make-believe in the early years and outright lies as they grow older.

Lies, thus, are essential to life—and this is where Giorgio Agamben comes in. Agamben's most famous and influential book is Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life ([1995] 1998). Much as Eco does in respect to what every one knows on some level (that truth is a lie), so Agamben does with respect to bare life (that human life is first and foremost animal and more than animal). The twist for Agamben is that bare life is at the original basis of politics—hence (in a critical refiguring of Foucault) biopolitics. "The fundamental activity of sovereign power," says Agamben (181), "is the production of bare life as originary political element and as threshold of articulation between nature and culture, zo· and bios." The two Greek words for life—zo· and bios—Agamben takes from Aristotle's (and

the Greek language's) distinction between the mere living common to all living things (zo·) and the more categorical concept of life (bios) in the sense of belonging to a group. Here begins Agamben's influential contribution to the debate over sovereign power and its relation to citizenship—a debate that goes back at least to the writ of habeas corpus in 1679, when English law modified the terms of the Magna Carta (1215) to assure that no man can be judged without being brought, bodily, before the judiciary. The question at issue is the state of corpus, the natural body, as a sign of elemental human liberty—a question that today stands behind the uncertain rights of children not to be tried as adults, of the mentally incapacitated not to be executed, of political prisoners to be brought to trial, of the poor to be properly represented. Agamben thus adds (125). "Corpus is a two-faced being, the bearer both of subjection to sovereign power and of individual freedom." In other words, the sovereign is the entity to which is ascribed the authority to guarantee the liberties of the citizen up to the point at which the State judges those freedoms a threat to the State itself. This, many will recognize, is the theme taken up today in the rehabilitation of Carl Schmitt's state of exception which, in time, turned upon the question of the State power of the Nazis who in 1933 suspended article 48 of the Weimar constitution in order to protect the "German people"—in order, that is, as it could already then be seen: to create the F·hrer as at once the sovereign and the embodiment of the natural body of the German people. The camps are the places where all rights are permanently suspended unto death in the name of the higher body of the state's exception. The camps, argues Agamben, are ultimately the nomos, the law itself. "Today," he says (181), "it is not the city but rather the camp that is the fundamental biopolitical paradigm of the West."

Hence, the subtle and astonishing line Agamben develops in the respective neglects of Foucault's biopolitics (no camps) and Arendt's human condition (no biopolitics). Political life is rooted not in membership but in zo·, inbare life which draws no distinction between the categories of living beings. There is no difference between inclusion and exclusion. Bare life is the human condition. Homo Sacer is the state of political man who may be killed but not sacrificed—whose killing cannot be a homicide, whose being is indistinguishable from that of any other living thing. The modern democratic state establishes the writ of habeas corpus as the lie that protects its own life as the body of a people. The right to be present before the judiciary is the right to be judged by the state which ultimately possesses the right to suspend rights—hence, the right to kill, the power over life, and death in the name of the state.

Agamben's ingenious interpretations are, in effect, comparable to Eco, the other, other Italian in that they are a theory of the lie of life that lies at the origin of the democratic state. It is not merely that state authority's lie—which they do—but they are founded on the lie that, in real terms everyone can appreciate for its dishonesty. The lie of the biopolitical State is that it is devoted to protecting life when it is actually more concerned with producing and policing death. So long as the modern democratic State floats on so weak a reed as the State's right to make exceptions, all who are excluded from citizenship—like all who are included—will remain in roughly if not exactly the same position. The camp is the norm. In our time the millions living in refugee camps, the unknown numbers detained as political prisoners, the billions living as squatters, all the millions more of "undocumented workers" are all excluded by law from inclusion in political sphere the foundational lie of which is that those included are protected. The evidence of human history is to the contrary—that sooner or later the Sovereign will assert its right to protect itself to the exclusion of all rights to inclusion.

If the final lie is that life cannot ever be fully human in the sense that liberal humanism has insisted upon, then what are we to say of the staples of left politics—of liberation, of emancipation, of freedom, of speaking truth to power, of revolutions and resistances, and of all the rest? "The total humanization of the animal," says Agamben in The Open (77), "coincides with a total animalization of man." So long as the left continues to wed itself to the liberal romance of humanity's special nature, it will fail to acknowledge its (our) own animal nature, which is to say: our capacity to kill for life's sake, our willingness to suspend the laws of life, our animal-like propensity for cruelty that kills for no other reason than that it is our nature. The right is always willing and able to kill for power's sake. The lefts of our time are not. Power is biopower, power over life. The lie is that power can be gentle and reasonable. The truth is the absurd proposition that to live -- animals must kill and do. The lion cannot be called before a magistrate. Her killings are not homicides; nor are the religious sacrifices.

We who live and work in or on the bare margins of the academy are sometimes shocked by what goes on therein. It is one thing to be radical in the streets where windows are broken, heads are bloodied, where effigies are hanged and bodies beaten or killed outright. It is another, so say even we good folk of the academic left, to breach the rules of civil order. Everyone with eyes to see and heart enough to say it understands that colleges and universities are high on the list of the of liberal institutions willing to declare a state of exception to their own rules. Here is a short list drawn from the past few years of experience direct and indirect:

- Leaders of a faculty union use their authority to quash a sex abuse complaint against one of them; the untenured woman who complained lost her position.
- An adorable young teacher uses his authority to vote down the work of students of a colleague he loathes; the students were denied the honors.
- Senior faculty at a prestigious English university, decided to shun a first-year student because he was thought to be on friendly terms with a faculty colleague they would like to kill; the student is called "the enemy" and soon departs the school.
- President of one of the nation's most liberal colleges demands that the local police arrest and jail students protesting at his office; mayor of the town refuses, saying they are kids, it is spring, no damage is being done; president brings internal charges against the kids.

I could go on. You could go on. These of course are symbolic killings, but they are murderous none the less. Life goes on in most cases. But then there are others where the life that goes on is put at risk, and the world loses something precious.

The case of another, other Italian is worthy of mention in this sad connection. Russell Jacoby, in a recent commentary in the Chronicle of Higher Education (June 13, 2008), recalls the story of Paul Piccone (1940-2004) at Washington University in St Louis. Piccone was the founding editor of Telos magazine which, before Polity Press in the UK entered the translating business, was the foremost source of news and texts of and by the leading European social theorists. It was also easily at the top of the list of intellectual lively and challenging journals -- and still is. The context for Paul's story is the long overdue publication in June, 2008, of a collection of Piccone's most important writings, Confronting the Crisis: Writings of Paul Piccone (Telos Press 2008). To read or reread the essays in this collection is to be reminded of what a truly modern version of Prison Notebooks might look like. The range of subjects—Gouldner, Gramsci, Jay, Marcuse, the New Left, Husserl, more and more—recalls not only the range of Paul's philosophical engagements but the astonishing precision of his interpretations.

I wrote one essay with Paul—a memorial tribute in Theory and Society to Alvin Gouldner. Paul and Al had been friends in the days when sociology at Washington University was in decline. Though both were in a kind of internal exile their two magazines, Telos and Theory and Society, were, together, the only games in town—and in the 1970s the only games in any leftish academic place. When Gouldner died, I was an editor at Theory and Society (which since has become a pale reflection of its founder's brilliance) and lived nearby. Thus, it fell to me to organize a few of the memorial matters, including a special issue of Theory and Society on Al for which Paul and I wrote on his reflexive method. Mind you, I was then under the sway of Gouldner's genius and had read everything he had written, including a good bit of manuscript he left behind. I knew Paul, but like many who knew him, kept him at arm's length for reason of his notoriously brutal honesty. What amazed me in the work was that Paul seemed to know and remember everything Gouldner had written—and to have a strong (not always favorable) understanding of the work. My amazement turned on the fact that when it came to serious and deep appreciation of Gouldner's thinking I, the devotee, could not touch the insight of Piccone, ever the gadfly. I was then young and callow if not quite narrow; Piccone, just three years my junior, was the master of so much more in so many languages from so many philosophical and theoretical traditions. His role in that one minor piece of his life's work was just one of the many digressions of a life lived confronting the liberal lies.

Russell Jacoby's tribute to Paul Piccone turns on the refusal of Washington University to grant him tenure. As Jacoby accurately states, Paul's case was exceptionally strong and was supported in positive and detailed letters by Habermas, among others of his international rank. (I saw the Habermas letter and know it to have been unqualified in its praise of the work. How I saw it—or how Paul got a copy of it—I do not recall—but the fact that he had it was indicative of his relentless pursuit of truths and lies.) Jacoby attributes Piccone's failure to be tenured to his aggressive truth-telling nature. It is true that Paul was the kind of friend who could share a drink in one instance, but in the next rise at a public conference to denounce you for your hopeless stupidity. Yet, the other side of the story is of the behavior of the administration in Paul's case.

Faced with an overwhelmingly strong case in the affirmative for an individual they wanted nothing to do with, the University, according to Paul, took the exceptional step of putting an economist who called himself Doug North in charge of the administrative review. North, who is said to have won a Nobel Prize in economics, was famously hostile to sociology in any of its manifestations. Whether it was North himself or the administration, or both, the tactic was to hire paid reviewers who would trash Paul's scholarly work. In the end, evidence to the contrary notwithstanding, the case was denied. Paul challenged in court, but lost. How could he have won in St Louis, then a two-company town, when Washington University, one of Ralston-Purina's virtually wholly-owned subsidiaries,

demanded a judgment? I do not know what position, if any, Budweiser might have taken on the case, but it was clear that the dog food company controlled the board at the time when the university was in dire financial straits and insisted on its way.)

Today, there is no sociology at Washington University. Today, in many areas, it survives as a distinguished university. But it survives as a university and like liberal institutions everywhere that was willing and able to declare its own states of exception to its own rules. Today Paul Piccone would be labeled "uncivil" and the onus for his failures attributed to his manners. Yet, also today, and because of the other Italians, including Paul himself (and I mean his writings as well as his story), it is possible to consider the ruthlessness of the liberal lie that truth is truth and that the liberal state of affairs must be protected from homo sacer—those of bare life who can be killed without being sacrificed. Piccone took over my theory courses when I left Illinois, but Southern Illinois University in Carbondale was even less the place for him. Thence he made his way to New York City to resettle Telos for what it had become and remains today—a sometimes irritating, always aggressive, voice for contrariness in a murderous world.

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A Conversation between Jackson Katz and Douglas Kellner on Guns, Masculinities, and School Shootings

Jackson Katz, Douglas Kellner

Katz is the creator of the educational video Tough Guise: Violence, Media and the Crisis In Masculinity, and the author of The Macho Paradox: Why Some Men Hurt Women and How All Men Can Help. Douglas Kellner is George F. Kneller Chair in the Philosophy of Education at UCLA and author of the recently published Paradigm Press book Guys and Guns Amok: Terrorism and School Shootings from the Oklahoma City Bombings to the Virginia Tech Massacre..

JK: The one-year anniversary of the Virginia Tech massacre was April 16, followed by the ninth anniversary of Columbine just a few days later on April 20. As April 16 approached, there were all sorts of stories in the mainstream media about the tragedy. As someone who has written extensively about media culture but also now about gun violence, is there a way you can characterize media coverage of VT, NIU and other recent school shootings? In your opinion, what are some of the strengths and weaknesses of the coverage?

DK: For the most part, corporate media coverage of the school shootings remains on the level of media spectacle, presenting the events as tragedies, while failing to go into the features that the shootings have in common. One searches in vain in the corporate media for discussion of a "crisis in masculinity" or a thoughtful critique of our out-of-control gun culture, and yet in most of the tragedies, the shooters use guns and violence to resolve their masculine identity crises and create celebrity for themselves through acts of violence.

JK: In your book Guys and Guns Amok, you link incidents of domestic terrorism like the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing to the phenomenon of school shootings. Can you explain the similarities (and differences) as you see them?

DK: In both school shootings and acts of domestic terrorism the perpetrators use guns and/or commit violence to resolve crises in masculinity and to constitute themselves as "tough guys," real men. They also use the media to create media spectacles of terror and to constitute themselves as celebrities, hence the title of my book, "Guys and Guns Amok."

JK: Can you describe the origins of the word "amok," as well as your use of the term in relation to school shootings and other killing rampages?

DK: The initial title "Guns Amok" emerged as I was outlining a table of contents for this book. As it turns out, there were many Google references that connected "guns" and "amok"; there were almost thirty films with "Amok" in their title, including a Chuck Jones Daffy Duck film "Duck Amuck" that I recalled when thinking about the title, as well as a Star Trek episode "Amok Time," that I remember well. There are books and journals with "Amok" in their title, including Stefan Zweig's novel Amok (1922). Hence, there are enough cultural references to make the title resonant and viable.

To be sure, the problem with the Virginia Tech and other school shootings is not guns running amok, but people with guns killing other people. Thus the editorial board at Paradigm Press suggested the current title Guys and Guns Amok. This seemed appropriate as I wanted to argue that both an out-of-control gun culture and problematic constructions of masculinity were behind the killing and violence that I am engaging in this book. Moreover, the word "amok" has anthropological grounding with various accounts of lonely, frustrated and disturbed men who have suffered loss going beserk, running amok (a Malay word) and randomly killing people (see Steven Pinker How The Mind Works, 1997). Since "running amok" takes place in specific societal contexts, in my book I situate my analyses within the context of violence and guys and guns amok in contemporary U.S. society and culture.

JK: Many school shooters kill themselves, or enact a plan where they are almost certain to be killed by police. In that sense, are there any notable similarities between the motivations of American school shooters and Islamist suicide bombers from the Middle East? Notable differences between them?

DK: Domestic terrorists, like Timothy McVeigh who perpetrated the Oklahoma City bombings, are often prepared to sacrifice their lives for political purposes, as are Middle Eastern terrorists. Likewise, it appears that many school shooters are so full of rage that they are prepared to die to become martyrs to avenge their grievances and as a way of gaining immortality as celebrities.

JK: Your book's title foregrounds the issue of gender in the discussion of violence. Yet the mainstream media discourse about school shootings is typically degendered, with reporters and commentators referring to "perpetrators," "shooters," "individuals," "kids killing kids," etc., when nearly all of the killings are done by men and boys. You employ the concept of a "crisis in masculinity" that I have also used in my work. What is your understanding of this crisis in masculinity, and how do you see this crisis playing a role in these killings?

DK: By a "crisis in masculinity," I mean a dominant societal connection between masculinity and being a tough guy, assuming what you have described in your own work as a "tough guise," a mask or façade of violent assertiveness, covering over vulnerabilities. The crisis erupts in outbreaks of violence and societal murder, as men act out rage, which takes extremely violent forms such as political assassinations, serial and mass murders, and school and workplace shootings -– all exhibiting guys and guns amok. The crisis in masculinity is grounded in deteriorating socio-economic possibilities for men and is aggravated by our current economic crisis. It is also produced in part by a media which shows violence as a way of solving problems and is also connected to the escalation of war and militarism in the United States from the long nightmare of Vietnam through the military interventions of the Bush-Cheney administration in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as escalating societal violence in the media and society at large.

JK: How do factors of class and race enter into the problem of school shootings?

DK: A multicausal analysis needs to look at multiple factors of class, race, gender, and specific social environments in which shootings take place. So far, research suggests that black and Latino shootings tend to be specific-target incidents that are related to particular issues or personal conflicts. The striking thing about many of the shootings from Columbine to the present was that it was white middle-class school shooters who tended to attack their victims indiscriminately, showing that alienation and violence is expanding through all classes, races, and sectors of contemporary U.S. society.

JK: You write about media spectacle and the ways that the media construct our views of contemporary events and history. You also lay out various types of spectacles: spectacles of terror, spectacles of horror, political spectacles, megaspectacles. Can you provide an overview of your idea of spectacle?

DK: My notion of media spectacle builds on French theorist Guy Debord's conception of the society of spectacle, but differs significantly from Debord's concept. For Debord, spectacle "unifies and explains a great diversity of apparent phenomena" (Debord 1967:10). Debord's conception, first developed in the 1960s, continues to circulate through the Internet and other academic and subcultural sites today. It describes a media and consumer society, organized around the production and consumption of images, commodities, and staged events.

For Debord, "spectacle" constituted the overarching concept to describe the media and consumer society, including the packaging, promotion, and display of commodities and the production and effects of all media. Using the term "media spectacle," I am largely focusing on various forms of technologically-constructed media productions that are produced and disseminated through the so-called mass media, ranging from radio and television to the Internet and the latest wireless gadgets. Every medium, from music to film and television, from news and information to advertising, has multiple forms of spectacle, involving such things in the realm of news as spectacles of terror related to terrorist episodes or school shootings, spectacles of horror such as hurricanes and other natural events, or the collapse of mines or horrific auto accidents, as well as political and celebrity scandals, all attesting to the trend toward tabloid journalism and "infotainment." The forms and circulation of the spectacle evolve over time and multiply with new technological developments.

Megaspectacles constitute a situation whereby certain spectacles become defining events of their era. They include socio-political dramas that characterize a certain period, involving such things as the 1991 Gulf war, the O.J. Simpson trials, the Clinton sex and impeachment scandals, or the Terror War that has defined the era from 9/11 to the present, and, currently, the 2008 presidential election. Megaspectacles are defined both quantitatively and qualitatively. The major media spectacles of the era dominate news, journalism, and Internet buzz and are highlighted and framed as the key events of the age, as were, for instance, the Princess Diana wedding, death, and funeral, the extremely close 2000 election and 36 Day Battle for the White House, or the September 11 terror attacks and their violent aftermath. Since the 1990s, there have been recurrent spectacles of terror such as terrorist attacks, or school shootings which I see as a form of domestic terrorism.

JK: In the Northern Illinois University shooting, the killer walked into a crowded lecture hall and started shooting. He was therefore making an unambiguously public statement. Like Cho at Virginia Tech, who actually produced a video he released to the media just before enacting his crime, was the NIU shooter in a sense the writer, director and producer of his own media spectacle? If so, does this feature of his rampage teach us anything about the media culture in which we are immersed? Given the profit-centered motivations of TV networks and others in the media industries, centrally among them demands and pressures for higher ratings, do you have any thoughts about how media organizations can responsibly cover school shootings?

DK: Cho's multimedia video dossier, released after the Virginia Tech shootings, showed that he was consciously creating a spectacle of terror to create a hypermasculine identity for himself and avenge himself to solve his personal crises and problems. The NIU shooter, dressed in black emerged from a curtain onto a stage and started shooting, obviously creating a spectacle of terror, although as of this moment we still do not know much about his motivations. As for the television networks, since they are profit centers in a highly competitive business, they will continue to circulate school shootings and other acts of domestic terrorism as "breaking events" and will constitute the murderers as celebrities. Some media have begun to not publicize the name of teen suicides, to attempt to deter copy-cat effects, and the media should definitely be concerned about creating celebrities out of school shooters and not sensationalize them.

JK: You say that you see media spectacle as a contested terrain, that citizens/audiences are not merely passive objects that media dictates to. What are some of the ways that people can resist playing the role of passive media consumer as the spectacle of these school shootings plays out?

DK: People have to become critical of the media scripts of hyperviolence and hypermasculinity that are projected as role models for men in the media, or that help to legitimate violence as a means to resolve personal crises or solve problems. We need critical media literacy to analyze how the media construct models of masculinities and femininities, good and evil, and become critical readers of the media who ourselves seek alternative models of identity and behavior.

JK: The NIU murders come on the heels of several recent rampage killings, and of course the Virginia Tech massacre last April. You report that the Virginia Tech massacre was the twenty-fifth school shooting on an American campus since Columbine in 1999. That figure represents more than half the number of of school shootings across the world in the same time span. You argue for a multicausal explanation of the phenomenon of school shootings.

What do you see as some of the key reasons why there are so many school shootings in this country? Is it facile to say, as some have argued, that the crux of the problem is a function of the easy availability of firearms? Is that too simplistic an explanation? What are some of the other cultural factors that are implicated?

DK: First of all, I want to make it clear that there is not one defining cause of the school shootings that are escalating. To be sure, they are in part a product of guys and guns amok and the escalation of gun ownership, the crisis in masculinity, the rise in societal and global violence, and a media which portrays violence as a solution to personal, political and social problems, and which create media spectacles that make celebrities out of school shooters and terrorists. Yet, we also need to address youth alienation, crises in schooling and families, and escalating societal violence. Since there are multiple factors involved in the specific shootings and acts of domestic terrorism, we need a multiple range of solutions.

JK: You lecture frequently around the world. What are some of the things you've heard from people in other countries about killing rampages in the U.S.? Does discussion typically focus on the lax gun laws here? In the course of your travels and interactions with colleagues and others overseas, have you heard any insightful comments about U.S. culture from an external vantage point that have allowed you to see domestic reality through a new lens?

DK: School shooting is becoming a global problem so there is concern with it everywhere. In fact, it appears that the U.S. has in a sense been exporting school shootings as they have begun to appear more frequently in countries throughout the world. Yet, many people in other countries are astonished that we have such lax gun laws and that one can buy assault rifles and handguns and ammunition over the Internet, or from gun shows where there is not even a background check. Other countries have passed more restrictive gun laws after dramatic school shootings, just as countries produce stricter security measures after terrorist attacks.

JK: College administrators as well as faculty and staff are on high alert; everyone is aware that these tragedies could happen on their campus. What can be done to prevent further incidents? You have written that there are several important developments that have been catalyzed by the Virginia Tech tragedy, including: 1) More intense and comprehensive focus on school security; 2) More intense focus and scrutiny of mental health issues; 3) Renewed debate about gun control and the role of guns in U.S. society; and 4) A renewed focus on the need to reconstruct education in a way that emphasizes the need to teach peace studies, non-violent conflict resolution, critical media literacy, and citizenship. Can you speak to these positive outcomes, as well as their limitations?

DK: Most schools, colleges and universities now have plans in place to provide better mental health protocols and facilities to deal with students with problems. There is also growing concern with campus security and quick responses in terms of information and campus security when shooting or terror episodes occur. Obviously, though, we need further debate about gun laws, male violence and rage, and thus seeing guys and guns amok as a serious problem. Likewise, we need to address problems of increasing societal violence, youth alienation, dysfunctional schools and families, and many other issues.

JK: After the NIU shooting, as with Virginia Tech, the mainstream media seized upon the idea of "mental illness" as the explanatory framework when it came to ascertaining a motive for the killings. But the vast majority of mentally ill are not violent. Also, there are large numbers of women who suffer from various forms of mental illness. If so, why are female school shooters so rare? Is there something about masculinity and mental health in the contemporary era that these shootings might be telling us?

DK: The term "mental illness" is a social construct and tells us that someone has a serious problem and that we need to have better institutions and people to help us deal with this problem. Obviously, men are suffering particular forms of mental health problems and crises in masculinity and so of course we need to deal with cultural constructs of masculinity and femininity in terms of how we define and deal with mental health or illness.

JK: After the NIU shootings, right-wing talk radio caller lines lit up with calls for issuing conceal carry permits to students and professors –- in essence to respond to violence with violence –- or the threat of it. Can you talk about

the way the politics of guns and the NRA helps shape media coverage and national discourse about mass killings done with firearms?

DK: As a Professor and lecturer, I can say that the last thing in the world I want is guns in classrooms, or lecture halls. This is just asking for an increase of violence. The fact that in many states there are laws being debated about letting students and teachers carry concealed weapons on campus testifies to the power of the NRA and right-wing gun groups. Rather, we need serious discussions of what causes school shootings and how to deal with potential problems, rather than unleashing an army of would-be Rambos and vigilantes.

I should note that as a philosopher of education and critical theorist of society I do not want to reduce the analysis to more school surveillance and security, or more mental health screening and psychological services, but rather to try to put the problem in a broader context of societal violence, the alienation of youth, and the need to reconstruct education and society to have healthier images of masculinity, and to reconstruct education to bring in more peace and human rights education, multiculturalism and the respect for difference, including women's and men's studies, ethnic studies, environmental studies, and the philosophy of education generally.

JK: You write that new media and new technologies play a part in rapidly circulating extremist ideologies and provide ready examples of redemptive violence, which is a major theme of contemporary Hollywood film. Talk radio and Internet sites and discussion groups also provide outlets for white male rage. Elsewhere, you have written about the potential of new media technologies to catalyze and create community and connection. What are some other ways that new media either contribute to the contemporary phenomenon of mass killings, or can be employed to prevent them?

DK: Obviously, the Internet has a lot of pro-gun sites that present guns as necessary tokens of hypermasculinity and allow people to buy weapons and ammunition. This definitely needs to be dealt with as a societal problem. On the other hand, the Internet can be a great source of information and enlightenment that criticizes extreme violence from the Iraq war to Al Qaeda terrorism and that promotes peace, understanding, and non-violent conflict resolution—themes that also need to be taken up in our schools, colleges and universities.

JK: Is there some way that college communities can respond to these shootings that goes beyond upgrading law enforcement policies and procedures? I am thinking specifically about the role of faculty in offering forums for constructive intellectual inquiry into this problem, which people tend to see – understandably -- as a law enforcement and public safety matter first and foremost. For example, when you wrote Guys and Guns Amok, how were you envisioning it would be used? Who is your target audience? What role can a cultural studies analysis play in the prevention of future tragedies?

DK: Schools from K-12 plus institutions of higher education need to take the issue of school shootings very, very seriously and examine the cases sociologically, to discuss causes, and to seek solutions. I envisaged Guys and Guns Amok as providing an overview of the problem, as well as an examination of some related issues, debates, and possible solutions. I would like also to promote critical media literacy courses to make students and citizens critical readers of the media, to learn to create alternative information and media, and to be more socially and politically aware. This involves what John Dewey called citizenship training and making us all more responsible citizens, able to deal with ongoing social problems. It also involves dealing with crises in masculinity and providing new images of masculinity and femininity, and a reconstruction of education that makes it more relevant to the crises of the contemporary era.

THE END

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Poetry: For Harvey Milk and Comstock Correctional Upstate New York

Becky Thompson

For Harvey Milk

When you reached your arms out
to Dan White did you know he had
a gun? Did his locked jaw warn

you? Is this why you had a camera
shop, to photograph the
present? Did you know we lit

a galaxy of candles on Castro Street
and that the boy in Iowa saw you
on TV? When James Byrd was dragged

through the streets, did you feel his spirit?

Comstock Correctional Upstate New York
for David Gilbert*

on my first visit ice packs my tire treads
my car spins around to head home in the snow
parking lot divides: visitors and corrections
I drive around in circles, car pacing

the guards see my first time eyes
search my bag and body, smiling
my underwire bra the threat they enjoy fondling,
passing it from one guard to the next

a series of doors slam shut
each metal clink I feel smaller
bathroom walls smell of steel gurneys
vending machines spit out Hormel's chili

the numbers assigned press us together
rows of women with lipstick holding infants with ribbons
I stare at the door where the prisoners emerge
privacy between visitors an invisible line

you enter the room, stride gentle, palms open,
your hard-earned blue tee under prison shirt grey
yellow formica table stockades our legs
your hands, Jewish dancing, eyes as big as the clock

I start in with questions, you talk fast, I scribble,
no tape recorder allowed, I chronicle long hand
my questions review the drama of Black Power
armed struggle, you explain, another word for defense

my pacifist leanings collide with your logic:
they shot Hampton in his bed, assassinated Malcolm
I couldn't keep running for white cover in college
underground life teetered our judgments

my body stays tense with secretary's function
each inmate who enters you hold with your eyes
tender man in this dungeon, life sentence, I am sinking
you see me falling, ask: are you breathing?

you reach across distance, a light brush on my arm
your touch sends electricity I had reserved just for women
my twenty years lesbian falling into your body,
interview shifts from subject to belonging

I leave before count, thirty-five pages in hand
officers' cajoling, a cover for terror
they unlock and lock the maze to the outside,
a part of me stays, slipped inside your skin.

** David Gilbert, a member of the Weather Underground in the late 1960s and 1970s, was sentenced to life in prison for his involvement in the 1981 Brinks robbery. He continues to do antiracist work in prison.*

Becky Thompson
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