FAST CAPITALISM

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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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Noam Chomsky and the Public Intellectual in Dark Times

Henry A. Giroux

In a market-driven system in which economic and political decisions are removed from social costs, the flight of critical thought and social responsibility is accentuated by what Zygmunt Bauman calls "ethical tranquillization."[1] One result is a form of depoliticization that works its way through the social order, removing social relations from the configurations of power that shape them, substituting what Wendy Brown calls "emotional and personal vocabularies for political ones in formulating solutions to political problems."[2] Consequently, it becomes difficult for young people too often bereft of a critical education to translate private troubles into public concerns. As private interests trump the public good, public spaces are corroded and short-term personal advantage replaces any larger notion of civic engagement and social responsibility. Under the restricted rationality of the market, pubic spheres and educational realms necessary for students to imagine alternative futures and horizons of possibility begin to disappear as do the public intellectuals who embrace "the idea of a life dedicated to values that cannot possibly be realized by a commercial civilization [who rejects the idea that] loyalty, not truth, provides the social condition by which the intellectual discovers his new environment."[3]

In a dystopian world shaped by twenty-five years of neoliberal savagery with its incessant assault on public values, the common good, and social responsibility, it has become difficult to remember what a purposeful and substantive democracy looks like or for that matter what the idea of democracy might suggest. Democracy as both an ideal and working practice is under assault just as a number of anti-democratic educational, market, military, and religious fundamentalisms are gaining ascendency in American society. Increasingly, it becomes more difficult to inhabit those public spheres where politics thrives—where thinking, speaking, and acting subjects engage and critically address the major forces and problems bearing down on their lives. In this new moment in history, the symbiotic relationship among cultural institutions, political power, and everyday life has taken on a new register. The educative nature of politics has now become one of the most important elements shaping how people think, desire, act, and behave. The question of how society should imagine itself or what its future might hold has become more difficult given the eradication of social formations that place an emphasis on cooperation, trust, honesty, and compassion. As a robust democratic sociality is lost to the imperatives of commerce and a harsh winner-take-all Social Darwinism, there has emerged what Richard Sennett calls a new character type: "an uncooperative self, ill-disposed for dealing with complexity and difference."[4] This character type is increasingly embodied in a new type of intellectual that has become entirely beholden to corporate power and whose ideas, values, and interaction with the American people is bereft of any sense of equality, justice, or ethical considerations. The American people are now beholden pedagogically to what might be called the anti-public intellectual.

Under such circumstances, to cite C. W. Mills, we are witnessing the breakdown of democracy, the infantilization of thought, the disappearance of critical intellectuals, and "the collapse of those public spheres which offer a sense of critical agency and social imagination."[5] Mill's prescient comments amplify what has become a tragic reality. Missing from neoliberal market societies are those public intellectuals who connect scholarship to larger public issues, provide a model of moral witnessing for young people, and embody the struggle to deepen and energize the civic imagination. Neoliberalism has produced and supported over the last 40 years a host of foundations, institutes, and cultural apparatuses in which to produce a new kind of public intellectual, that is, an anti-public intellectual who rails

against the social state, social wage, unions, and any other public sphere that offers the public a discourse and mode of subjectivity that operates in the public interest, in support of what might be called the democratic commons. From Bill Gates to Bill Kristol, the American public is inundated with arguments that privilege the market over social needs, individualize the social, and make exchange value the only value that counts. These anti-public intellectuals now dominate the mainstream media and have been waging a war against higher education, public transportation, social provisions such as food stamps and social security. As Noam Chomsky points out:

> There are major efforts being made to dismantle Social Security, the public schools, the post office-anything that benefits the population has to be dismantled. Efforts against the U.S. Postal Service are particularly surreal. I'm old enough to remember the Great Depression, a time when the country was quite poor but there were still postal deliveries. Today, post offices, Social Security, and public schools all have to be dismantled because they are seen as being based on a principle that is regarded as extremely dangerous.[6]

These subsidized anti-public intellectuals are not driven by the search for truth but by loyalty to corporate power, all the while producing and legitimating policy that is as authoritarian as it is cruel and stupid, whether it is curbing the reproductive rights of women and preventing environmental reforms or the teaching of creationism in the schools. For example, in the last few decades, we have seen market mentalities attempt to strip education of its public values, critical content, and civic responsibilities as part of its broader goal of creating new subjects wedded to consumerism, risk-free relationships, and the disappearance of the social state in the name of individual, expanded choice. Tied largely to instrumental ideologies and measurable paradigms, many institutions of higher education are now committed almost exclusively to economic goals, such as preparing students for the workforce—all done as part of an appeal to rationality, one that eschews matters of inequality, power, and the ethical grammars of suffering.[7]

In what follows, I want to address the work of Noam Chomsky and his role as a public intellectual. I argue that Chomsky's role intellectually, educationally, and politically is more relevant now than ever given the need for a display of civic courage, theoretical rigor, and a willingness to translate private troubles into public concerns. Moreover, he provides a model for young people and others to understand the importance of using ideas and knowledge to intervene politically in civic, political, and cultural life in order to make clear that democracy has to produce informed and critical agents who believe that democracy has to be struggled over, if it is going to survive.

Noam Chomsky is a world renowned academic best known not only for his pioneering work in linguistics but also for his ongoing work as a public intellectual in which he has addressed a number of important social issues that include and often connect oppressive foreign and domestic policies--a fact well illustrated in his numerous path breaking books.[8] If fact, Chomsky's oeuvre includes too many exceptionally important books, making it all the more difficult to single out any one of them from his extraordinary and voluminous archive of work. Moreover, as political interventions, his many books often reflect both a decisive contribution and an engagement with a number of issues that have and continue to dominate a series of specific historical moments over the course of fifty years. His political interventions have been historically specific while continually building on the power relations he has engaged critically. For instance, his initial ideas about the responsibility of intellectuals cannot be separated from his early criticisms of the Vietnam War and the complicity of intellectuals in brokering and legitimating that horrendous act of military intervention.[9] Hence, it becomes trying to compare his 1988 book, Manufacturing Consent, coauthored with Edward S. Herman with his 2002 bestseller, 9/11. Yet, what all of these texts share is a luminous theoretical, political, and forensic analysis of the functioning of the current global power structure, new and old modes of oppressive authority, and the ways in which neoliberal economic and social policies have produced more savage forms of global domination and corporate sovereignty.

His many recent books, articles, and interviews have addressed how the new reign of neoliberal capital is normalized not only through military and economic relations but also through the production of new forms of subjectivity organized around the enslavement of debt, the security-surveillance state, the corporatization of higher education, the rise of finance capital, and the powerful corporate controlled cultural apparatuses that give new power and force to the simultaneously educative and repressive nature of politics. Chomsky does not subscribe to a one-dimensional notion of power that one often finds among many on the left who view power as driven exclusively by economic forces. He keenly understands that power is multifaceted, operating through a number of material and symbolic registers, and he is particularly astute in pointing out that power also has a pedagogical function and must include an historical understanding of the public relations industry, existing and emerging cultural apparatuses, and that central to matters of power, agency, and the radical imagination are modes of persuasion, the shaping of identities, and the molding of desire.

Rooted in the fundamentals of anarcho-syndicalism and democratic socialism, he has incessantly exposed the gap between the reality and the promise of a radical democracy, particularly in the United States, though he has provided detailed analysis of how the deformation of democracy works in a number of countries that hide their diverse modes of oppression behind the false claims of democratization. Chomsky has attempted to refigure both the promise of democracy and develop new ways to theorize agency and the social imagination outside of the neoliberal focus on individualization, privatization, and the assumption that the only value that matters is exchange value. Unlike many intellectuals who are trapped in the discourse of academic silos and a sclerotic professionalism, he writes and speaks from the perspective of what might be called contingent totalities. In so doing, he connects a wide variety of issues as part of a larger understanding of the diverse and specific economic, social, and political forces that shape people's lives in particular historical conjunctures. He is one of the few North American theorists who embrace modes of solidarity and collective struggle less as an afterthought than as central to what it means to connect the civic, social, and ethical as the foundation for global resistance movements. Implicit to his role as a public intellectual is the question of what a real democracy should look like, how are its ideals and practices subverted, and what are the forces necessary to bring it into being?

As someone who has been writing about youth, neoliberalism, disposability, the rise of the punishing state, the centrality of education to politics, and the notion that politics is about not only the struggle over power and economics but also the struggle over particular modes of culture, subjectivity and agency, his work has been invaluable to me and many others. While it is often pointed out that he is one of the most influential left critics of American foreign policy, what is unique about his ongoing analyses is that his work is layered, complex, often connecting issues far removed from more narrow analyses of foreign policy. For Chomsky, crises are viewed as overlapping, merging into each other in ways that often go unrecognized. Accordingly, in this paradigm, the war on education cannot be understood if removed from the war on the social state, just as the rise of the punishing state cannot be removed from harsh and punitive survival-of-the-fittest ethic that now characterizes a mode of savage neoliberalism in the United States in which the ruling classes no longer believe in political concessions because their power is global while politics is local and colonized by neoliberal geopolitical power relations. In fact, Chomsky often brings together in his work issues such as terrorism, corporate power, United States exceptionalism, and other major concerns so as to provide maps that enable his readers to refigure the landscape of political, cultural, and social life in ways that offer up new connections and the possibility for fresh modes of theorizing potential resistance.

He has also written about the possibility of political and economic alternatives, offering a fresh language for a collective sense of agency and resistance, a new understanding of the commons, and a rewriting of the relations between the political and the up-to-date institutions of culture, finance, and capital. And, yet, he does not provide recipes but speaks to emerging modes of imaginative resistance always set within the boundaries of specific historical conjunctures. His work is especially important in understanding the necessity of public intellectuals in a time of utter tyranny, cruelty, financial savagery, and a mode of soft authoritarianism. His work should be required reading for all academics, students, and the wider public. Given that he is one of the most cited intellectuals in the world suggests strongly that his audience is general, diverse, and widespread, inhabiting many different sites, public spheres, and locations.

Chomsky is fiercely critical of fashionable conservative and liberal attempts to divorce intellectual activities from politics and is quite frank in his notion that education both in and out of institutional schooling should be involved in the practice of freedom and not just the pursuit of truth. He has strongly argued that educators, artists, journalists, and other intellectuals have a responsibility to provide students and the wider public with the knowledge and skills they need to be able to learn how to think rigorously, be self-reflective, and to develop the capacity to govern rather than be governed. But for Chomsky it is not enough to learn how to think critically. Engaged intellectuals must also develop an ethical imagination and sense of social responsibility necessary to make power accountable and to deepen the possibilities for everyone to live a life infused with freedom, liberty, decency, dignity, and justice. On higher education, Chomsky has been arguing since the sixties that in a healthy society universities must press the claims for economic and social justice and that any education that matters must not merely be critical but also subversive. Chomsky has been unflinching in his belief that education should disturb the peace, and engage in the production of knowledge that is critical of the status quo, particularly in a time of legitimized violence. He has also been clear, as were his political counterparts the late Pierre Bourdieu and Edward Said, in asserting that intellectuals had to make their voices accessible to a wider public and be heard in all of those spheres of public life in which there is an ongoing struggle over knowledge, values, power, identity, agency, and the social imagination.

Capitalism may have found an honored place for many of its anti-public intellectuals, but it certainly has no room

for the likes of Chomsky. Conservatives and liberals along with an army of unyielding neoliberal advocates have virtually refused to include him in the many discussions and publications on social issues that work their way into the various registers of the dominant media. In many ways, Chomsky's role as an intellectual and activist is a prototype of what may be called an American radical tradition and yet appears out of place. Chomsky appears to be an exile in his own country by virtue of his political interventions, the shock of his acts of translation, and his displays of fierce courage. As Zygmunt Bauman has argued the "distinguishing mark" of the writer as exile "is the refusal to be integrated–the determination to …conjure up a place of one's own, different from the place which those around are settled, a place unlike the places left behind and unlike the place of arrival."[10] This is not to suggest that he would make a claim to be in exile the sense claimed by many intellectuals, though he might agree with the late Edward Said who was interested in what he called "travelling theory" in the sense of "being errant, provisional, intellectually on the hoof, [as one of] several ways in which he remained true to the exiled people to whom he lent his voice."[11] Exile in this sense suggest that as a "traveler" Chomsky is not interested staking out academic territory and consequently has no disciplinary sphere to protect.

Chomsky is interested in connecting intellectual competencies and critical independence with matters of social responsibility. His political and theoretical purview is capacious. Unlike, many academics today who are caught in the cult of specialization and forms of disciplinary terror—forever excoriating those intellectuals who attempt to breach the steadfast rules of the discipline, Chomsky is committed to an intellectual vocation that questions authority, breaks down the dominant appeal to commonsense, and exercises a "heighted sensitivity to oppression and injustice."[12]

Terry Eagleton offers a definition of how academics are different from public intellectuals that I think is useful in understanding Chomsky's work. He writes:

> Intellectuals are not only different from academics, but almost the opposite of them. Academics usually plough through a narrow disciplinary patch, whereas intellectuals ...roam ambitiously from one discipline to another. Academics are interested in ideas, whereas intellectuals seek to bring ideas to an entire culture....Anger and academia do not usually go together, except perhaps when it comes to low pay, whereas anger and intellectuals do. Above all, academics are conscious of the difficult, untidy, nuanced nature of things, while intellectuals take sides. ... in all the most pressing political conflicts which confront us, someone is going to have to win and someone to lose. It is this, not a deaf ear for nuance and subtlety, which marks them out from the liberal.[13]

While this description does not perfectly fit Chomsky, I think it is fair to say that his main role as a public intellectual is to lift ideas into the public realm in the hopes of exposing how power relations works for and against justice, how they are legitimated, and what can be done to challenge them. Many have commented on his staid delivery when he gives talks, but what they often fail to recognize is the sense of political and moral outrage that animates his diverse roles as a public intellectual. At the same time Chomsky is certainly an academic in terms of his rigorous intellectual work, but the point is that he is more than that. In the end, Chomsky's dialectical move between theory and practice, rigor and accessibility, critique and action offers up less a reason to praise him than to offer a noble vision of what we should all strive for.

As an engaged academic, Chomsky publically argues against regimes of domination organized for the production of violence and social and civil death. His ghostly presence offers up the possibility of dangerous memories, alternative ways of imagining society and the future, and the necessity of public criticism as one important element of individual and collective resistance. And, yet, Chomsky's role as a public intellectual, given the huge audiences that he attracts when he lectures as well as his large reading public, suggests that there is no politics that matters without a sense of connecting meaningfully with others. Politics becomes emancipatory when it takes seriously that, as Stuart Hall has noted, "people have to invest something of themselves, something that they recognize is of them or speaks to their condition, and without that moment of recognition…politics will go on, but you won't have a political movement without that moment of identification."[14] Chomsky has clearly connected with a need among the public for those intellectuals willing to make power visible, to offer an alternative understanding of the world, and to point to the hopes of a future that does not imitate the scurrilous present.

Chomsky has been relentless in reminding his audience that power takes many forms and that the production of ignorance is not merely about the crisis of test scores or a natural state of affairs—an idiotic argument if there ever was one—but about how ignorance is often produced in the service of power. According to Chomsky, ignorance is a pedagogical formation that is used to stifle critical thinking and promotes a form of anti-politics, which undermines matters of judgment and thoughtfulness which are central to politics. At the same time, neoliberalism's public pedagogy of ignorance is a crucial player in not just producing consent but also in squelching dissent. For Chomsky,

ignorance is a political weapon that benefits the powerful, not a general condition rooted in some inexplicable human condition. One of his most insistent themes focuses on how state power functions in various forms as a mode of terrorism reigning violence, misery, and hardship often as a function of class warfare and American global imperialism and how people are often complicitous with such acts of barbarism. Chomsky has been particularly insightful in arguing that the state thrives on keeping the American public ignorant so that it can render its illegal practices invisible and protect the "security of state power from exposure."[15] He writes:

> There is, of course, a sense in which security is threatened by public awareness .... The basic insight was expressed well by the Harvard political scientist Samuel P. Huntington: 'The architects of power in the United States must create a force that can be felt but not seen. Power remains strong when it remains in the dark; exposed to the sunlight it begins to evaporate.'[16]

At the same time, Chomsky is an ardent defender of the poor, those populations considered disposable, the excluded, and those marginalized by class, race, gender, and other ideologies and structural relations considered threatening to tyrants both at home and abroad. There is no privileged, singularly oppressed group in Chomsky's work. He is capacious in making visible and interrogating oppression in its multiple forms, regardless of where it exists. Yet, while Chomsky has his critics ranging from notables such as Sheldon Wolin and Martha Nussbaum to a host of less informed interlocutors, he rarely shies away from a reasoned debate, often elevating such exchanges to a new level of understanding and in some cases embarrassment for his opponents.[17] Some of his more illustrious and infamous debaters have included Michel Foucault, William Buckley, Jr., John Silber, Christopher Hitchens, and Alan Dershowitz. At the same time, he has refused, in spite of the occasional and most hateful and insipid of attacks, to mimic such tactics in responding to his less civil denigrators.[18] Some of Chomsky's detractors have accused him of being too strident, not theoretical enough, or more recently of not understanding the true nature of ideology. These criticisms seem empty and baseless to me and appear irrelevant considering the impact Chomsky's work has had on a younger generation, including many in the Occupy Movement, in calling into question the reckless mechanizations and dynamics of politics, power, and policies of the United States government and other authoritarian regimes.

It is important to note that I am not suggesting that Chomsky is somehow an iconic figure who inhabits an intellectual version of celebrity culture. On the contrary, he deplores such a role and is an enormously humble and self-effacing human being. What I am contending, however, is that in an age when the models for political leadership and civic responsibility are put forth in American society for young people and others to learn from they are largely drawn from the ranks of a criminal, if not egregiously anti-democratic class, of elite financers and the rich. One example would be the highly revered Bill Gates. Chomsky offers a crucial, though often unacknowledged standard for how to be engaged with the world in ways in which issues of commitment and courage are tied to considerations of justice and struggle and not merely to the accumulation of capital regardless of the social costs. His decisive influence on a range of fields extending from linguistic theory to theories of the state and education have not only opened up new modes of inquiry but also give gravitas to the political impulse that underscores such contributions. The point here is neither to idolize nor demonize Chomsky—the two modalities that often mark reactions to his work. Rather the issue is to articulate the ways in which Chomsky as a public intellectual gives meaning to the dispositions and characteristics that need to be in place for such critical work: a historical consciousness, civic courage, sacrifice, incisiveness, thoughtfulness, rigor, compassion, political interventions, the willingness to be a moral witness, and the ability to listen to others.

As a public intellectual, Chomsky offers academics a way to be both scholars and critical citizens, and calls upon them to use their talents and resources to promote public values, defend the common good, and connect education to social change. He strongly rejects the notion that academics are merely servants of the state and that students are nothing more than enterprising consumers. The role of academics as public intellectuals has a long history in Chomsky's work and is inextricably connected to defending the university as a public good and democratic public sphere. Chomsky made this clear in a talk he gave at the Modern Language Association in 2000 when he insisted that

> [u]niversities face a constant struggle to maintain their integrity, and their fundamental social role in a healthy society, in the face of external pressures. The problems are heightened with the expansion of private power in every domain, in the course of the state-corporate social engineering projects of the past several decades....To defend their integrity and proper commitments is an honorable and difficult task in itself, but our sights should be set higher than that. Particularly in the societies that are more privileged, many choices are available, including fundamental institutional change, if that is the right way to proceed, and surely including scholarship that contributes to and draws from the never-ending popular struggles for freedom and justice.[19]

Higher education is under attack not because it is failing, but because it is a potentially democratic public

sphere. As such, conservatives and neoliberals often see it as a threatening institution that reminds them of the rebellious legacy of the sixties when universities were the center of struggles over free speech, anti-racist and feminist pedagogies, and the anti-war movement. Higher education has become a target for right-wing ideologues and the corporate elite because it is capable of teaching students how to think critically and it offers the promise of new modes of solidarity to students outside of the exchange value proffered by neoliberal instrumentalism and the reduction of education to forms of training. Chomsky extends the democratic legacy of higher education by insisting that universities and faculty should press the broader claims for economic and social justice.

He also argues more specifically that while higher education should be revered for its commitment to disinterested truth and reason, it also has a crucial role to play in its opposition to the permanent warfare state, the war on the poor, the squelching of dissent by the surveillance state, the increasing violence waged against students, and the rise of an authoritarian state engaged in targeted assassination, drone warfare, and the destruction of the environment. Part of that role is to create an informed and reflective democratic citizenry engaged in the struggle for social justice and equality. Chomsky has no interest in rooting the practice of freedom in the narrow discourses of identity politics with its particularized notion of freedom just as he has no interest in encouraging students to become apostles of fashionable intellectuals. This becomes clear when he writes about the need to go beyond fighting against the corporatization of the university. He stakes out a line of criticism that points to a general not a particular notion of freedom, refusing a politics and pedagogy largely defined within the parameters of a specialized academic discipline. For example, he writes:

> The processes of corporatization are a serious threat to the liberatory and subversive function that the universities should try to serve in a free and healthy society. To defend their integrity and proper commitments is an honorable and difficult task in itself, but our sights should be set higher than that. Particularly in the societies that are more privileged, many choices are available, including fundamental institutional change, if that is the right way to proceed, and surely including scholarship that contributes to and draws from the never-ending popular struggles for freedom and justice.[20]

Standing for truth is only one role the university can assume, but it isn't enough. It must also fulfill its role of being attentive to the needs of young people by safeguarding their interests while educating them to exercise their capacities to fulfill their social, political, economic and ethical responsibilities to others, to broader publics, and the wider global social order. As Chomsky reminds us caring about other people is a dangerous idea in America today, and signals the transformation of the United States from a struggling democracy to a full-fledged authoritarian state. [21] He writes:

> If you care about other people, that's now a very dangerous idea. If you care about other people, you might try to organize to undermine power and authority. That's not going to happen if you care only about yourself. Maybe you can become rich, but you don't care whether other people's kids can go to school, or can afford food to eat, or things like that. In the United States, that's called "libertarian" for some wild reason. I mean, it's actually highly authoritarian, but that doctrine is extremely important for power systems as a way of atomizing and undermining the public.[22]

Given the intensive attack that is currently being waged against higher education, Chomsky's defense of the latter as a democratic public sphere and his insistence on the responsibility of intellectuals – be they academics, students, artists, educators, or cultural workers, to name only a few – takes on a new urgency. Public intellectuals can play a crucial political role in not only translating private issues into public concerns, but also offering up a discourse of interrogation and possibility, one that understands the new historical configuration in which we find ourselves when power is separated from politics, demanding not only a new consideration of politics and power but also what it means to think otherwise in order to act otherwise. Chomsky is an important public intellectual because he has become a model for what it means to put a premium on social and economic justice, display a willingness to raise disquieting questions, make power accountable, defend democratic values, take political risks, and exhibit the moral courage necessary to address important social issues as part of an ongoing public conversation.

This is not an easy task at a time when many academics have removed themselves from engaging larger social issues and are all too willing to accommodate those in power, functioning as either entertainers or stenographers. Too many academics have become either uncritical servants of corporate interests, rendered invisible, if not irrelevant, behind a firewall of professional jargon, or have been reduced to a subaltern class of adjunct and part-time labor, with little time to think critically or address larger social issues. Consequently, they either no longer feel the need to communicate with a broader public, address important social problems, or they are deprived of the conditions that enable them to write, think, and function as public and engaged intellectuals. This is particularly troubling in

an aspiring democracy where intellectuals above all should take seriously the notion that if democracy is to mean anything it "requires its citizens to risk something, to test the limits of the acceptable."[23] This is particularly egregious when for many academics their working conditions no longer support their role as scholars and public intellectuals.

Noam Chomsky not only represents the antithesis of intellectual accommodation, he actually exemplifies a new kind of intellectual, one reminiscent of rigorous theorists such as Antonio Gramsci and Michelle Foucault, on the one hand, and C. Wright Mills, on the other, all of whom refused, as Mills put it, the role of "a sociological book-keeper," preferring instead to be "mutinous and utopian" rather than "go the way of the literary faddist and the technician of cultural chic."[24] Like C. Wright Mills, Chomsky addresses pressing social issues and painstakingly looks at how they are lived through the experiences of people who are often deeply affected, yet disappeared from such narratives. His work on political economy, regimes of authoritarianism, cultural domination, and global youth resistance is in my mind a pioneering work that examines the mechanisms of politics, and collective struggles globally within a larger matrix of economics, power, history, and culture. Chomsky is not content to focus on the perpetrators of global crime and the new forms of authoritarianism they are spreading in different ways across the globe, he also focuses on those who are now considered disposable, those who have been written out of the discourse of what he considers a tortured democracy, as a force for collective resistance capable of employing new modes of agency and struggle.

Whether he is talking about war, education, militarization, or the media, there is always a sense of commitment, civic courage, and a call for resistance in his work that is breathtaking and always moving. His interventions are always political and yet he manages to avoid the easy mantle of dogmatism or a kind of humiliating clownish performance we see among some alleged leftist intellectuals. Like C. Wright Mills, he has revived the sociological imagination, connecting the totality and the historically specific, a broader passion for the promise of democracy, and a complex rendering of the historical narratives of those who are often marginalized and excluded. There is also a refusal to shield the powerful from moral and political critique. Chomsky has become a signpost for an emerging generation of intellectuals who are not only willing to defend the institutions, public spheres, and formative cultures that make democracy possible but also address those anti-democratic forces working diligently to dismantle the conditions that make an aspiring democracy meaningful.

We live at a time when the growing catastrophes that face Americans and the rest of the globe are increasingly matched by the accumulation of power by the rich and financial elite. Their fear of democracy is now strengthened by the financial, political, and corporate elite's intensive efforts to normalize their own power and silence those who hold them accountable. For many, we live in a time of utter despair. But resistance is not only possible, it may be more necessary now than at any other time in America's past given the current dismantling of civil rights, democratic institutions, the war on women, labor unions, and the poor—all accompanied by the rise of a neoliberal regime that views democracy as an excess, if not dangerous and an obstacle to implementing its ideological and political goals. What Noam Chomsky has been telling us for over fifty years is that resistance demands a combination of hope, vision, courage, and a willingness to make power accountable, all the while connecting with the desires, aspirations, and dreams of those who suffer under the apparatuses of regimes of violence, misery, fear, and terror. He has also reminded us again and again through numerous historical examples that public memory contains the flashpoints for remembering that such struggles are always collective and not merely a matter of individual resistance. There are always gaps in the work we do as intellectuals, and in Chomsky's case there is more to be said as Archon Fung points out regarding the role that public intellectuals can play in shaping "the democratic character of public policy," work with "popular movements and organizations in their efforts to advance justice and democracy", and while refusing to succumb to reformist practices "join citizens—and sometimes governments—to construct a world that is more just and democratic."[25]

He may be one of the few public intellectuals left of an older generation that offers a rare glimpse into what it means to widen the scope of the meaning of political and intellectual inquiry —an intellectual who rethinks in a critical fashion the educative nature of politics within the changed and totalizing conditions of a neoliberal global assault on all vestiges of democracy. He not only trades in ideas that defy scholastic disciplines and intellectual boundaries, he also makes clear that it is crucial to hold ideas accountable for the practices they legitimate and produce while at the same time refusing to limit critical ideas to simply modes of critique. In this instance, ideas not only challenge the normalizing discourses and representations of commonsense and the power inequities they legitimate, but also open up the possibilities inherent in a discourse that moves beyond the given and points to new ways of thinking and acting about freedom, civic courage, social responsibility, and justice from the standpoint of radical democratic ideals.

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Anonymous Revolution?: A Hacker Manifesto Revisited

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> This is the future, whether one approves or not, and the failure on the part of governments and media alike to understand, and contend with the rapid change now afoot, ought to remind everyone concerned why it is that this movement is necessary in the first place.
> — Anonymous

Introduction

We live in a time in which so many things are going or have gone wrong, in which there is so much injustice and where the future seems so fraught with danger that it is difficult not to despair, to fall prey to the deepest cynicism. Because there is so much evidence for pessimism simply to hope becomes intellectually suspect. I begin with this prelude because I wish to seriously argue for something that is as hopeful as it may appear unlikely: that Anonymous is about to become the revolutionary force of our age.

Most of this article however, will not be about Anonymous specifically at all, but rather will be focused upon hackers and vectoralists as written about by MacKenzie Wark (2004) a decade ago. The significance of the insights of A Hacker Manifesto must be clarified and reiterated, and its errors of analysis corrected, before my argument concerning Anonymous can even begin. Wark's thesis places hackers (in his own expansive definition of the term) in a particularly important place, economically and culturally, within the contemporary capitalist moment. My argument stands upon this base to structurally place Anonymous politically in a likewise crucial position within this moment.

Anonymous has been evolving. Its first political action, Operation Chanology, contrary to much of what was said in the media, was initiated principally for the lulz. Anons liked to provoke and then laugh at the impotence of their angry targets. There still exist today many individual Anons and small collectives who believe Anonymous should stay true to their 4Chan and /b/ roots; that is to say, there are those among them who believe Anonymous should be apolitical pranksters and that all this talk about freedom and injustice are pretention. But they are a minority; the vast majority of Anons came to fully take on board the rebel hero role the media bestowed upon them. Today there are many new recruits to the Anonymous banner who know little and care less about 4chan and /b/ and their shared mimetic culture; they have been drawn to Anonymous, at least partly, for political reasons. I will argue that now it is the case for many Anons that they were drawn to Anonymous because of the frustration and lack of control of their individual lives and the power that is potentially manifest in anonymous collectivity. They are not consciously Marxist, or at least very few of them are, but they have come to recognize their own class interests in the collective resistance to power that Anonymous expresses. Now they are international and perhaps someday soon will be able to turn one of their most important memes – We are Legion – into fact.

A Hacker Manifesto Revisited

Things are happening very, very fast and we are struggling to keep up, or perhaps better said, to catch up! It

was only a decade ago that Mackenzie Wark wrote A Hacker Manifesto (2004, online) and he was struggling then to articulate the significant, no the crucial, elements of what had already transpired in capitalist evolution. The present eludes us because we still have yet to understand the past. Yet things have now in some ways become clearer; most certainly things have moved on. But before we try to grasp the present moment let us first look again at Wark's argument.

Wark, consciously mimicking the style of the Communist Manifesto, wrote:

> 01. There is a double spooking the world, the double of abstraction. The fortunes of states and armies, companies and communities depend on it. All contending classes - the landlords and farmers, the workers and capitalists - revere yet fear the relentless abstraction of the world on which their fortunes yet depend. All the classes but one. The hacker class.

The "hacker class"? Terry Eagleton (2004, online) produced what could be considered the classical Marxist critique of Wark's thesis:

But it seems perverse, as well as unduly romanticizing, to hang a connection between intellectual workers and criminalized code-busters on an arbitrary metaphor. . . From a Marxist viewpoint, "class" is the wrong word in any case. Intellectuals, like butchers or lap dancers, form a group rather than a social class. They don't, for example, necessarily share a single location within the means of production. Social classes are not just bunches of people with things in common. Senior citizens or people with bushy eyebrows don't constitute a potentially revolutionary class, since they are not so positioned within the capitalist system as to be capable of taking it over. You do not become a revolutionary class simply by being militant, visionary, impoverished or oppressed.

Eagleton is correct and I will come back to Wark's error in this regard in a moment. But first let us consider some of the truths that Wark (2004, online) managed to articulate.

> 06. As the abstraction of private property was extended to information, it produced the hacker class as a class. Hackers must sell their capacity for abstraction to a class that owns the means of production, the vectoralist class - the emergent ruling class of our time. The vectorialist class is waging an intensive struggle to dispossess hackers of their intellectual property. Patents and copyrights all end up in the hands, not of their creators, but of the vectoralist class that owns the means of realizing the value of these abstractions. The vectoralist class struggles to monopolise abstraction. Hackers find themselves dispossessed both individually, and as a class. Hackers come piecemeal to struggle against the particular forms in which abstraction is commodified and made into the private property of the vectoralist class. Hackers come to struggle collectively against the usurious charges the vectoralists extort for access to the information that hackers collectively produce, but that vectoralists collectively come to own. Hackers come as a class to recognize their class interest is best expressed through the struggle to free the production of abstraction not just from the particular fetters of this or that form of property, but to abstract the form of property itself.

The "vectoralist class"? Again we will come back to this error in a moment and rectify it. It is the same error as was made about the hacker "class". The error is not exactly small but yet it is easily remedied; and the truths Wark articulated are far more important. Wark was articulating what he had already seen, that which perhaps not many had really taken notice of as significant. But today the struggles over piracy and copyright, spying and hacktivism, have exploded into obviousness. They are ubiquitous, from the revelations of Edward Snowden, to the prosecution of Pirate Bay, to the Anonymous hacking of the Justice Department. What Wark has put his finger on is the crucial importance of electronic abstraction – economically, politically and culturally – in this extended moment of capitalist development. Copyright and piracy are not minor struggles or debates appearing at the periphery of the system of commodification – of everything – that is contemporary capitalism. They are central to it. The "surveillance society" is the internet surveillance society. The knowledge economy is crucially a computer mediated economy.

Our informational commons recently emerged as one of the key domains of the class struggle in two of its aspects, economical in the narrow sense and socio-political. On the one hand, new digital media confront us with the impasse of "intellectual property". The World Wide Web seems to be in its nature Communist, tending towards free flow of data – CDs and DVDs are gradually disappearing, millions are simply downloading music and videos, mostly for free. This is why the business establishment is engaged in a desperate struggle to impose the form of private property on this flow. On the other hand, digital media (especially with the almost universal access to the web and cell phones) opened up new ways for the millions of ordinary people to establish a network and coordinate their collective activities, while also offering state agencies and private companies unheard-of possibilities of tracking down our public and private acts (Žižek, 2014, online).

Wark's greatly extended definition of the label "hacker" is useful in trying to understand this contemporary electronic development of abstraction in the commodity form. The term "vectoralist" is useful too. For Wark the

hacker need not be seen only as someone producing code to break and enter to either subvert the system or rob your bank account. No, Wark's understanding includes virtually all knowledge workers. As he stated more recently in an interview (Gregg, 2013, online):

> To me, a hacker is someone who turns information — of any kind — into intellectual property. Hence, programmers can be hackers, but so too can scientists, artists, writers, designers, and so on. It's about how these disparate kinds of concrete activity end up in the same abstract form — as "intellectual property".

The contemporary agri-business farmer that produces the hidden corn-oil processed ingredients in the snack the financial services office worker is eating, is neither vectoralist nor hacker, though he may use many products produced by hackers and owned by vectoralists. Nor is the logger or the pulp and paper factory worker that have together provided the labour for the product upon which a portion of that office worker's labour is printed. But the office worker is a hacker, whether the office is connected to retail distribution or sales, media production or actuarial science. As Wark might say, it is all code.

Referring to hackers and vectoralists as classes was perhaps rhetorically useful also. It dramatizes their significance in the present world system. Perhaps as Eagleton says it is "unduly romanticizing" but it certainly facilitated the parody of Marx (though I am sure Wark would not think "parody" the best choice of word here). Wark's argument, I believe, is actually quite seriously Marxist ("cryto-Marxist" is how Wark describes it himself) in the best sense of that descriptor. Thus, we may forgive him his exaggerations for rhetorical effect, and as I shall argue, also for his analytical focus and clarification. It may at first glance seem strange that what I am suggesting is an error, is also useful for clarification but so be it.

We should nonetheless be clear: neither hackers nor vectoralists are classes. Eagleton was quite right in this. Rather what they are is particular segments of classes; and as Wark quite rightly makes the argument, they are particularly important . . . segments. It is this crucial importance that mistakenly labelling them classes enables us to clearly see.

Eagleton suggests that Hackers belong to the petite bourgeois class. In this he too is mistaken. Some hackers belong to this class and are also an important segment of it as well. And just like the petit bourgeois generally, they also frequently misunderstand their own objective interests as being those of the ruling class. Petty bourgeois hackers own their own small security firms. They own and work in small media production companies or educational provision firms. The key word is small. They are not Stratfor or Sony. The laws concerning intellectual copyright or surveillance are not being made or altered on their behalf . . . though the ideological justification of such may well present the case as though they were. The State does not belong to them!

Mack Zuckerberg (2012, online) has famously stated he is a hacker and supports Wark's expanded definition:

> The word "hacker" has an unfairly negative connotation from being portrayed in the media as people who break into computers. In reality, hacking just means building something quickly or testing the boundaries of what can be done.

Well, the term is flexible and open to contestation of definition. But if Zuckerberg is a hacker by some definitions, and some aspects of Wark's definition in particular, he is certainly not by others. Rather he is a vectoralist, buying the intellectual labour (the hacking) of others to profit from.

No, hackers are petty bourgeois or proles. The material difference between owning your own small company and working for Microsoft or the NSA does have its ideological effects. Just as the difference between being an owner operator taxi driver or a wage paid bus driver have different material circumstances that incline the latter more easily than the former to perceive collectivist political interest. However, in both cases, taxi owners and say, an electronica disk jockey, may nonetheless grasp their own collective interests in spite of some more superficial and deceptive circumstance. That is to say, that while ideology is facilitated by circumstance and frequently succeeds in deceiving the small business owner of whatever sort, the more fundamental objective interest of the petit bourgeois class lies with the proletariat. The most important objective interests of hackers line up together whether they own their own business or not.

The consciousness of hackers and vectoralists share the state of consciousness of the ruling class, proletariat and petite bourgeoisie. That is to say, the ruling class and its vectoralist segment understand very well their objective interests, insofar at least, as the maintenance of power is concerned. They may disagree among themselves about many things; they may fight for power and control as individuals; but where their collective interests are concerned they are united. One could make an argument that perhaps they often misunderstand their interests where profit and power conflict with more fundamental aspects of the human condition, with regard to the environment for

example. But that would be the subject of a different paper. No, what is important here, is that with regard to the maintenance of power, the bourgeoisie understand things very well and act on that understanding on a variety of levels: economically, politically, culturally and militarily. By contrast, one can say most charitably of hackers, of the other two classes generally, proletariat and petit bourgeois, that they are divided and confused.

But let's consider Wark again:

> 06. Hackers come as a class to recognize their class interest is best expressed through the struggle to free the production of abstraction not just from the particular fetters of this or that form of property, but to abstract the form of property itself.

This is very important if it is true. But is it?

I would say yes . . . and no. Hackers as a group are varied in their beliefs, so in that case this important recognition of what is most important with respect to their shared circumstance is an understanding only shared by some. So, in that sense no, it is not true. However, this statement by Wark (ibid) is most definitely true: "Only one intellectual conflict has any real bearing on the class issue for hackers: the property question." The principal objective condition of the "property question" is this: workers produce services and products through their labour power that the employer class buy as a commodity; or in Wark's (ibid) terms ". . . information that hackers collectively produce, but that vectoralists collectively come to own." Hackers as individuals possess a variety of beliefs and opinions concerning their situation but there is only one central collective truth (as just expressed above) concerning it. Thus, there is consistency in their articulation of resentment towards the status quo of power relations.

The Political Potential of Anonymous

The time has come to put two things together. The time has come to move from Marxism to Leninism. The time has come to consider Anonymous in the light of Wark's Manifesto.

Therefore, just as hackers have a multiplicity of beliefs, so too does Anonymous. Many Anons are anarchist libertarians. Many are socialist libertarians. Many are just simply libertarians; and they foolishly believe in the identity of market freedom and freedom more generally. Many have thought so little about political economy it is impossible to give them a label; some of them even brag about this. Many Anons are quacks. A large number of Anons are "Truthers", greatly concerned with the "truths" about 9/11, Area 51 and chem trails. Quackery is abundant and multi-variable in Anonymous discourse. But there is nonetheless some consistency in their positions.

Cornell West (2013) was asked what he thought of "Truthers" and the 9-11 conspiracy theory. He famously replied that while he did not really know what to think of the particular case, the distrust of government and its intelligence agencies was something he shared. Anonymous completely distrusts corporations, governments and the media. All Anons have that in common.

Thus far Anonymous has had little contact with "traditional" left-wing activists (apart from the occasional unpleasant brush up on the street against Black Block anarchists). However, Anonymous now has new recruits from the ranks of the "politicals". People are getting involved with them not because of any interest in hacking per se but rather because they see in Anonymous a potential to act upon the world. They see in Anonymous a new kind of organizational/non-organizational form, which, suggests new horizontal promise as an alternative to the traditional hierarchical organizational forms of both mainstream electoral politics and trade unionism on the one hand, and the far left Marxist and even anarchist organizations on the other.

This line of thinking resonates with the hopes for the Occupy movement. But while I would not wish to pronounce Occupy dead (it is far from it!) or a failure, the original hoped for potential has run its course. There were, and are, limitations to the possibilities of this sort of movement. Jose Lopez (2014) expresses the limitations succinctly:

> One of the fundamental limitations of much of the leaderless, anarchic, horizontal, chaotic modes of contemporary protest/action is the extent to which it exemplifies a type of politics (participatory, democratic, radically egalitarian) that can only be produced as an exception. Contrast the Occupies to factory occupations. The former are limited and temporary as they do not themselves produce the material conditions of their reproduction. Their function is really to educate through spectacle, to prefigure, as anarchists like to say.

Anonymous is in many ways similar to Occupy. Between Anonymous and Occupy there has been considerable

affinity, and, I am sure, overlap in participation. And spectacle certainly features highly in the Anonymous lexicon of action types. But I would not make the claims for Occupy I wish to make for Anonymous. Yes, the Internet makes all the difference. And here we come back to Wark's argument about hackers. The internet has made possible a form of political organization/non-organization and activism hitherto unprecedented in human history.

There is no unity among Anons except for that noted above of their complete distrust of the status quo. They do not trust the government (any government because Anonymous is now international in terms of both "membership" and perspective). They do not trust corporations or the media. Thus, their opposition to the powers that be is fundamental, and I would argue, grounded precisely in what we have been considering above in terms of Wark's argument about hackers. It is precisely the property relations of this class-segment that grounds and unifies Anonymous praxis. Anonymous is, for example, highly prolific in video production. But these videos are not owned. They are constantly being remixed, cut and pasted and re-posted on the net. They resent all attempts to control this, whether on the part of YouTube, Google, Facebook or Twitter. They use these social media daily but they don't like them. They respond aggressively to attempts to control their free flow and exchange of words, images or data . . . one could say that they are naturally communist in their practices, in the sense Žižek spoke of earlier.

Most Anons would not recognize themselves in the argument I am providing here. Their praxis is an extremely under-theorized praxis; I would say unusually so. Anonymous does not come together in theory; but it does come together in practice. Their direct democracy works very simply and efficiently. Someone proposes an operation. Individuals argue about the suggestion or ignore it; they decide to support it or not. If there is not enough support the action dies on the drawing board, as it were. If enough individuals are interested and supportive, a collectivity emerges; plans are made and action is taken.

Anonymous engages with a lot of diverse issues, from paedophilia to economic inequality. However, their most consistent orientation to action, their most prevalent operations, concern the property relations of the internet. Some of them may express their understanding of this in terms of libertarian notions of freedom and free speech but the actions are actually grounded in the realities expressed in the Marxist analysis of property and exploitation, in Wark's analysis of the commodification of hacking, scarcity, abundance and abstraction.

Anonymous is not at all like Lenin in terms of articulating the consciousness of the class. Nor is their form of political organization remotely Leninist. Rather it is the very antithesis of democratic centralism. But that antithesis is precisely what is politically called for in the contemporary capitalist moment in terms of resistance.

There is a sad irony in the present moment. Marxist theory is not frozen back in the zenith of Marx's own analysis. It has substantially progressed in terms of depth and breadth of analysis; it has very nearly kept pace with the speed of change of capitalist political economy itself. Yes, very nearly, but only very nearly, because something is very wrong in the collective understanding of Marxists, anarchists and all the others who make up the Western world's Left intelligentsia. There must be something wrong there that goes well beyond this irony: the Left has never been weaker! The limits and weaknesses of electoral social democracy and traditional trade unionism have never been clearer. But the far left Marxist and anarchist parties appear to be only facing inward, tearing themselves apart with rifts and factional struggles; the significance of their action is mainly marked by its inconsequentiality.

At this moment all significant political resistance is reactive . . . reactive because we do not have the initiative at this historical moment. To recognize this is not itself reactionary, but simply deciding to work from where we are. Anonymous is the de facto political leader of the hacker class-segment. It is they who are the hope for the moment. It is they, who through their actions more than words, have grasped this truth expressed by Wark (ibid.):

> Hackers come as a class to recognize their class interest is best expressed through the struggle to free the production of abstraction not just from the particular fetters of this or that form of property, but to abstract the form of property itself.

It is only fitting to conclude this article with a quote from Anonymous (Aljazeera, online 2011):

> The tendency to relate past events to what is possible in the present becomes more difficult as the scope of the geopolitical environment changes. It is a useful thing, then, to ask every once in a while if the environment has recently undergone any particular severe changes, thereby expanding our options for the future. Terminology, let alone our means of exchanging information, has changed to such a degree that many essential discussions in today's "communications age" would be entirely incomprehensible to many two decades ago. As the social, political and technological environment has developed, some have already begun to explore new options, seizing new chances for digital activism — and more will soon join in. It is time for the rest of the world to understand why.

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The Postmodern Infantilization of the Media

Jacopo Bernardini

Contemporary societies are experiencing a new phenomenon, for which children and teenagers represent the epicenter of consumer culture, influencing the media system and giving shape to the desires and behaviors of a growing number of adults. The press has coined several labels – e.g., kidults, adult-children, and adultescents – to describe an increasingly recurrent reality. Husbands in their forties spend hours playing the same video games that obsess adolescents; managers and politicians behave like impulsive teenagers; and young adults live with their parents, watch cartoons and see in marriage and in parenting an obstacle to their independence. In general, one finds infantile adults, unable to grow up and take responsibilities.

The social sciences, in recent times, are taking an interest in the phenomenon, comparing it, mostly, to the socioeconomic changes that have characterized the postmodernity (Schor 2004; Barber 2007; Blatterer 2007) or to historical-generational perspectives (Mitchell 2006; Cross 2008; Bonazzi and Pusceddu 2008), eluding, however, a fundamental sector: the fruition of media and new technologies.

There are, in fact, many clues reflecting the systematic increase of the infantilist influence in major mass-media areas. The television schedule, for instance, has gradually lost its original pedagogic and cultural depth in favor of fun and entertainment. The movie industry increasingly markets kidult movies, sequels, remakes, and the heroes of comics and cartoons at the expense of the complexity of plot and dialogue. The use of the Internet by adults seems to be increasingly linked to recreational motivations, while that of video games has acquired a nostalgic-escapist function that promotes the regression of the adult male to a utopian world of fantasy and masculinity, resulting in an escape from family obligations and social responsibilities.

These are the four areas where the media promotion of the contemporary infantilist culture is most evident; thereby, they will be analyzed.

Compared to a mainly pedagogical origin and to a past characterized by a wide cultural value, television schedules today are dominated by reality shows, pseudo-documentaries with veiled educational appearances intended to shock and amuse the viewer, and talk shows that constantly encourage protagonists to fight, scream and behave like spoiled children.

Table 1 shows the worldwide highest rated TV shows of the last ten years. We can see that 45% of the most watched programs are television series (mostly medical drama and police dramas like CSI or NCIS), 41% are talent and reality shows, 7% sitcoms and 7% sports programs. Reality shows have been hugely successful in the past decade, in particular, Dancing with the Stars and American Idol. Dancing with the Stars is present 13 times in our table, American Idol 16 times. The latter is, undoubtedly, the most successful program of the decade, so much so that it ranks in the first place for six consecutive seasons, from 2003-2004 to 2008-2009, and again in 2010-2011. American Idol is a program that puts the life of some teenager in an American singing school on display: first loves, dreams, quarrels. Apparently addressed to peers of the protagonists, it has found unexpected success with adult audiences, especially among parents who began watching the program with their children and ended up deeply involved and childishly identified with the teenager.

Table 1. Most watched TV shows worldwide

	2003-4	2004-5	2005-6	2006-7	2007-8	2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
1	American Idol	American Idol	American Idol	American Idol Results	American Idol	American Idol Results	N.C.I.S.	American Idol	Sunday Night Football
2	C.S.I.	C.S.I.	American Idol Results	American Idol	American Idol Results	American Idol	Sunday Night Football	American Idol Results	American Idol Results
3	American Idol results	American Idol results	C.S.I.	Dancing with Stars	Dancing with Stars	Dancing with Stars	Dancing with Stars	Sunday Night Football	N.C.I.S.
4	Survivor: all stars	Desperate House Wives	Desperate House Wives	C.S.I.	Dancing with Stars res.	C.S.I.	The Mentalist	Dancing with Stars	American Idol
5	Friends	Survivor: Palau	Grey's anathomy	Dancing with Stars res.	Desperate Housewives	N.C.I.S.	N.C.I.S.: Los Angeles	N.C.I.S.	Dancing with Stars
6	Survivor: Pearl Island	Survivor: Vanuatu	Without a Trace	Grey's Anathomy	House	The Mentalist	C.S.I.	Dancing with stars res.	N.C.I.S.: Los Angeles
7	The Apprentice	C.S.I.: Miami	Dancing with stars	House	C.S.I.	Dancing with Stars res.	Dancing with stars res.	N.C.I.S.: Los Angeles	Dancing with Stars res.
8	E.R.	Without a Trace	Survivor: Guatemala	Sunday Night Football	Gray's Anathomy	Sunday Night Nootball	Desperate House Wives	The Mentalist	Big Bang Theory
9	C.S.I.: Miami	Grey's Anathomy	C.S.I.: Miami	Desperate House Wives	Sunday Night Football	Desperate House Wives	Gray's Anathomy	Criminal Minds	The Voice
10	Everybody Loves Raymond	Everybody Loves Raymond	House	C.S.I.: Miami	Survivor: China	Two and a Half Men	House	C.S.I.	Two and a Half Men

Source: Newsok, (2003-2010); The Bert Show (2010-2011); Shows.com (2011-2012)

Such phenomenon relates not only to reality shows that have young protagonists. As noted by Jean Baudrillard (2010) in his latest publication, The Agony of Power, there is a close correlation between infantilism and reality shows in general. The banality of reality shows, according to the French sociologist, is an expression of one's self as the ultimate form of confession mentioned by Foucault and coincides to the imprescriptible desire not to be anything and to be looked at as such. This is a propensity to disappearance that manifests in two ways: by demanding not to be seen or by falling into the irrational exhibitionism of one's own nothingness.

Another television sector in which the infantilization phenomenon is obvious is cartoons. In 2004, Mars Otc conducted a massive survey on the use of television by adults in which revealed interesting data: over a third of interviewees, aged between 18 and 54 years, in the last seven days had watched afternoon cartoons (either alone or with peers, never with children or grandchildren), mostly directed to a younger audience.

Furthermore, the schedule of the most prominent broadcasters has gradually adopted numerous animated series that can be appreciated by both young and older people. After the Simpsons came the Rugrats, then Futurama, and finally South Park, Family Guy and American Dad: animated sitcoms specifically aimed at an adult audience. One can also find the Japanese Anime series that, because of the extremely mature content, are broadcast only late at night.

The phenomenon, however, does not concern exclusively reality shows and animated series, but also documentaries, topical talk shows and, most of all, newscasts. From an aesthetic point of view, the image dominates the news: it has been proven that what is searched in a news anchor is not so much the facial expression or journalistic

skills, but the fact that the viewer likes his aesthetic presence. Twenty years ago, Postman (1994: 104) sustained that what is essential is "that the viewers like looking at their faces. It is the teller, not what is told that matters here".

Not only the anchor: the image has far-back taken over the word in the newscasts themselves. Additionally, with the advent of YouTube and the exponential growth of amateur video possibilities, the newscasts seem to be pursuing the visual spectacle of the news more than its real importance.

The news has moved to second place as the content refers more and more to the color and crime. Another phenomenon that has been growing is the loss of complexity in the news in favor of variety. According to a study conducted by Louis Menand in 2002, a news program of about thirty minutes relates, on average, fifteen to twenty stories. The speed with which a topic is discussed, and with which one topic follows another, desensitizes the viewer and cancels the critical thinking skills necessary to understand and reflect on a particular story. The events in the news disregard any historical continuity or any other context: they are nothing more than fragments of reality in rapid succession, funneled in a uniform flow. They are completely idiosyncratic, do not allow assessments, and tell an irrelevant story; their aesthetic prevails over the content. In other words, although they are mainly aimed at an adult audience, the methodology with which they are built is purely infantilizing.

In the film industry, the infantilization phenomenon is particularly evident. On the one hand, in the last few years the production of kidult-movies has increased greatly, as have films that highlight the immaturity of adults – male for the most part – or emphasize their inability to take responsibility and their propensity to constantly look to their past. On the other hand, we have the success of sequels, prequels and remakes of movies of the past, in which aged actors play the role of the young or that, referring to films that have shaped the history of cinema in the '80s and '90s, rely on the nostalgia of the viewer. This is itself a psychological regression to earlier life stages. In summary, the major Hollywood strategy to face the motion picture crisis of recent decades has been to produce fun, hip and prosaic block-busters with simple plots and minimal dialogues, apparently addressed to a young audience, but that can be easily appreciated by adults as well.

These trends can be clearly seen in Table 2, which lists the top box office movies of the last ten years.

Table 2. Top box-office movies worldwide

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
1	The Lord of the Rings 3	Shrek 2	Star Wars ep. 3	Pirates of the Carib. 2	Spider-man 3	The Dark Knight	Avatar	Toy Story 3	Harry Potter 8	Marvel's Avengers
2	Finding Nemo	Spider-man 2	Chronicles of Narnia	Night at the Museum	Shrek 3	Iron Man	Trans-formers 2	Alice in Wonder-land	Trans-formers 2	The Dark Knight 3
3	Pirates of the Crib.	The Passion of the Christ	Harry Potter 4	Cars	Trans-formers	Indiana Jones 4	Harry Potter 6	Iron Man 2	Pirates of the Carib. 4	The Hunger Games
4	The Matrix Reloaded	Harry Potter 3	War of the Worlds	X-Men: the Last Stand	Pirates of the Carib. 3	Hancock	Twilight 2	Twilight 3	Twilight 4	Skyfall
5	Bruce Almighty	The Incredibles	King Kong	The Da Vinci Code	Harry Potter 5	Wall-E	Up	Inception	Mission: Impossib. 4	The Hobbit
6	X-men 2	The Day after Tomor.	Wedding Crashers	Super-man Returns	I Am Legend	Kung Fu Panda	The Hang-over	Des-plicable Me	Kung Fu Panda 2	Twilight 5
7	Elf	The Bourne Supremacy	Charlie and the Chocol.	Happy Feet	The Bourne Ultimatum	Twilight	Star Trek	Shrek 4	Fast Five	Spider-man
8	Termi-nator 3	Shrek Tale	Batman Begins	Ice Age 2	National Treasure	Mada-gascar 2	The Blind Side	How to Train Yo.	The Hang-over 2	Brave

9	The Matrix Revol-utions	I, Robot	Mada-gascar	Casino Royale	Alvin and the Chipm.	Quantum of Solace	Alvin 2	The Karate Kid	The Smurf	Ted
10	Bad Boys 2	Troy	Mr and Mrs. Smith	In Pursuit of Happyn.	300	Dr. Seuss Horton	Sherlock Holmes	Clash of the Titans	Cars 2	Mada-gascar 3

Source: The Movie Times, 2003-2009; Box Office Mojo (2010-2012)

Classifying these movies by genre we find that, out of a total of 100 feature films, 31 are fantasy films originally directed at children and adolescents (e.g., the Harry Potter and Pirates of the Caribbean sagas), 23 are animated movies (mostly by Pixar, such as the various Shrek and Madagascar films), 13 are films with Marvel heroes as protagonists (Batman, Spiderman, etc.), 9 are teenage comedies (such as the Twilight saga) and 4 are kidult movies (Ted, The Hangover, etc.). What remain are just 20 films, one-fifth of the total, which are not formally addressed to young people or whose plot is not centered on the immaturity of adults

Another significant fact is that as many as 47 films out of 100 are sequels, prequels or remakes. Beyond the obvious reasons related to marketing strategies, such film typologies might be meant to satisfy the puerile and dull propensity of a public that does not want to be surprised or shocked: an audience that, as Barber (2007: 25) recently stated, just like a child seems to ask of movies and theater: "Tell me the story again, please? Now please tell me again."

Another purpose of prequels, sequels, remakes and, also, kidult movies, is to appeal on the nostalgia effect that lies in the postmodern individual who generally lives with the dimensions of uncertainty and insecurity. By re-experiencing past feelings and, therefore, regressing to previous life stages, he will find a stability that is apparently absent in the contemporary context that surrounds him. De facto, as shown by Gary Cross (2008), when people find an accelerating rate of change in many things so frustrating and alienating, they try to capture the fleeting past in their ephemeral culture and goods. It may seem strange that we seek stability in what lasted only briefly when we were young, but, as we age, our experiences as children and teens seem to be timeless.

The Internet is the dimension in which, probably, may be encountered the most striking signs of how the infantilization phenomenon took root in recent times. Table 3 shows the top ten Google searches over the past ten years.

Table 3. Most searched keywords in Google worldwide

	2003	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**
1	Britney Spears	Britney Spears	Janet Jackson	Bebo	iPhone	Sarah Palin	Michael Jackson	Chat-roulette	Rebecca Black	Whitney Houston
2	Harry Potter	Paris Hilton	Hurri-cane Katrina	My-space	Badoo	Beijing 2008	Face-book	iPad	Google+	Gang-nam Style
3	Matrix	Chris-tina Aguilera	Tsunami	World Cup	Face-book	Face-book login	Tuenti	Justin Bieber	Ryan Dunn	Hurri-cane Sandy
4	Shakira	Pamela Ander-son	Xbox 360	Meta-cafe	Daily-motion	Tuenti	Twitter	Nicki Minaj	Casey Anthony	iPad 3
5	David Beckham	Chat	Brad Pitt	Radio-blog	Webkinz	Heath Ledger	Sanalika	Friv	Battle-field 3	Diablo 3
6	50 Cent	Games	Michael Jackson	Wiki-pedia	Youtube	Obama	New Moon	Myxer	iPhone 5	One Direction

7	Iraq	Carmen Electra	American Idol	Video	Ebuddy	Nasza Klasa	Lady Gaga	Katy Perry	Adele	Selena Gomez
8	Lords of the Rings	Orlando Bloom	Britney Spears	Rebelde	Second life	Wer Kennt wen	Windows 7	Twitter	TEPCO	iPhone 5
9	Kobe Bryant	Harry Potter	Angelina Jolie	Minicnova	Hi5	Euro 2008	Dantri.com.vn	Gamezer	Steve Jobs	Megan Fox
10	Tour de France	Mp3	Harry Potter	Wiki	Club Penguin	Jonas Brothers	Torpedo Gratis	Facebook	iPad 2	Justin Bieber

Source: Zeitgeist, 2003-2012

It is immediately evident that most of them focus on famous celebrity teenagers (Britney Spears, Rebecca Black, Justin Bieber, etc.), the protagonists of teen movies and animated series (e.g., Harry Potter), video games (Battlefield 3, Diablo 3, etc.) and social networks (Facebook, Twitter, etc.). Out of 100 searches only 9 refer to topics which could be related to a purely adult imagination: 4 refer to media events (Iraq, Tsunami, etc.), 2 to politicians (Sarah Palin, Barack Obama), 2 to encyclopedias (Wiki, Wikipedia), and 1 to an operating system.

One might argue that the Internet is mostly used by children and young people, but that would be an incorrect statement: in a large research in 2010, CNN proved that the average age of those who surf the Internet every day is about 36 years old. In the same study another significant fact has been shown: the majority of adults use the Internet both for professional and for recreational reasons, especially through social networks and online communities.

Social networking, therefore, initially a prerogative of the youth, over time, seems to have become very popular among adults. In 2012, 55% of Twitter users were over 35 years old, a percentage that rises to 65% in Facebook and to 79% in LinkedIn. Fifty-three percent of registered users in the 24 most popular social networks and online communities are over 35 years old, 28% are over 45 years old. The average age of those who use social networks is 37 years: the average user of LinkedIn is 44.2 years old, of Twitter 37.3, of Facebook 40.5.

In 2011, the research agency Ipsos MediaCT conducted a major study on behalf of the Entertainment Software Association (ESA), the largest trade association for the video game industry in the world. The survey, designed to study the makeup of the modern gamer, denied a widespread association between video games and adolescents. This survey highlighted an unexpected yet significant fact: only a quarter of those who in 2010 regularly played videogames are less than 18 years old. About half, however, are between 18 and 49 years old. The latest data recorded by ESA, in 2012, revealed that the average age of the worldwide gamer is now 37 years old. Not only that, in 1999 only 9% of those who used video games were over 50 years old; in 2012 this age group represents 26% of the market. Those ranging from 3 to 18 years old represent 25%; we could then state that, nowadays, middle-aged people are more inclined to play video games than adolescents and teenagers.

In Die Tryin': Videogames, Masculinity, Culture, Derek Burrill (2008) connects the growing success of gaming among adults with the emergence of a new form of infantilist machismo: the boyhood phenomenon. According to the author, shooter and action video games, in which one takes control of a virile and violent avatar, allow the adult male to normalize both their childish and their macho sides. The refuge in boyhood allowed by such video games lead the adult to a new pseudo-adolescent dimension, far away from the responsibilities of maturity, to a playful and masculine parallel reality outside of time and space. Thus, video games are no longer toys for children, but techno-nostalgic machines that allow a regression of the male in a utopian world of fantasy and virility and an escape from a womanish reality characterized by family duties and social responsibilities. The thesis is intriguing; it is not, however, a purely male phenomenon: in 2012, 40% of all gamers in the world were women.

Shifting from a socio-psychological point of view to a socioeconomic one, we know that the worldwide video game market has grown by over 10 percentage points in the last ten years, while, during the same period, the Western economy was growing at a rate of less than 2%. It is undeniable that such growth is due, at least in part, to the expansion of the target towards the adult world. Are we then dealing with another clue of the infantilization of the media? De facto, the gaming market has diversified its production, creating a segment of video games specifically addressed to adults. The ESA research cited above, however, shows another significant fact: only 17% of the games sold in 2010 worldwide were explicitly directed at an adult audience. This means that the majority of adults does

not necessarily and exclusively enjoy games of a mature content, but prefers escapist, childish and fun games. In short, they still prefer Super Mario and Sonic the Hedgehog to interactive psychological dramas such as L. A. Noir. Therefore, has the market been gradually addressed to adults or, conversely, have adults decided to pursue a market that should not belong to them?

There is a double interpretation of the phenomenon. At a general level, postmodern society itself has gradually abandoned the idea that getting older means setting aside one's playfulness; a trend that, in most cases, has led the adult to maintain a durable coexistence with his inner child. At a more specific level, however, it is the video game market itself that has grown along with those children it was targeting in the '70s and '80s. Video games have evolved and grown along with their audiences: those who began, as children or adolescents, with the Atari 2600 and the NES have continued to use video games as the technology matured in tandem with them. It is the so-called digital generation (Prensky 2001): those who are in their thirties today have grown up with technology and developed a peculiar taste for it. They witnessed firsthand the evolution and the maturation of video games – but also of the Internet and media in general – developing a paradigm for which games should not be a prerogative of adolescence, but a diversion that is free from age limits. Previous and later generations, however, could not share such vision; to them the adult passion for video games, more than a generational issue, would be another indicator of postmodern immaturity.

Final Considerations

The empirical data and thesis displayed in this essay show a tendency considered undeniable and significant: the infantilization phenomenon is widely present in contemporary society and its analysis by the social sciences shall not exclude the dimensions of media and new technologies.

The thesis of the digital generation paradigm discussed above, may be a useful interpretation, though certainly not the only one. The same can be said for the thesis that we, as a society, have gradually abandoned the idea that getting older means abandoning fun.

The media promotion of attitudes that a classical paradigm of adulthood would necessarily understand as childish must be read as a further distinctive phenomenon of postmodernity. Even if certain generations would never explain it as such.

The considerations made in this essay, should integrate the impending reformulation of those models inherent to adulthood and social aging to which the social sciences, just like public opinion, seem more and more incapable of referring to.

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"Game over Mubarak": the Arab Revolutions and the Gamification of Everyday Life

Peter Snowdon

On Qasr Nil bridge the lion says: Game Over Mubarak. (Ahmed Ramadan/TwitPic)

1

One of the most widely reported slogans of the Arab revolutions of 2010–2011 was "Game over XXX", where XXX would be the name of the dictator you had not chosen.[1]

Photographs and videos in which such phrases featured got a lot of airtime in the Western media. While being in English doubtless helped, perhaps it was also because this was a cultural reference with which we feel particularly at home. It certainly fitted well with the image of these revolutions as an upwelling of understandable frustration from a population that was young, well-educated, largely unemployed, and broadly enthusiastic about Western democracy, culture and/or "values", as represented in particular by our entertainment media and consumer products. The slogan was picked up by international journalists and their editors, and soon began to figure in the title of articles, op-eds,

and photo galleries, whether from Al-Jazeera English (2011), CBS News (2011), or Foreign Policy (Springborg 2011).

On one level, the power of this slogan is its immediacy. It seems to require no explanation, even if you have never (consciously) heard it before. On another level, it invokes a (popular) cultural context which provides the basis for an implicit irony (as we all "know", life is not a (video) game), as well as a source of richer, more complex, but ultimately optional connotations, for those with some experience in the relevant fields of play.[2]

Some Western commentators were puzzled as to how Arab youths could be so familiar with not only the English language, but also the culture of English-language video games.[3] Yet video gaming is no less widespread in the Middle East and North Africa than it is in Europe or North America or South East Asia – or for that matter, any other part of the world where there are cities and cheap PCs available for rent.[4] Any visit to an Internet café in the region is likely to reveal more people playing Call of Duty or FIFA Football, than chatting on Facebook or consulting dating sites. The proliferation of pirated copies of games, low hourly rates, and a lack of alternative recreational spaces where so much time can be spent at so little cost and with so little interference from the world of adults and/or authority, means that video gaming is a major activity for Arab youth, as it is for young people in most parts of the urban world, North and South. It is thus arguable that, just as elsewhere, video games have now become the single most important influence on the visual culture of young people in the region. To cite just one telling statistic, of the 1.6 billion Internet users worldwide who play games online, 36% are in the Middle East (Thome 2011).

In an illuminating article on the circulation and reception of pro-Arab video games in Palestine, Helga Tawil-Souri cites a twelve-year-old girl she interviewed in Jenin, who told her that "none of the games with Arabs in them that she had ever played before these three [Under Siege and Under Ash, made by Dar el-Fikr (Syria), and the Hezbollah-produced game, Special Force] had allowed her not to shoot at Arabs; in her words, 'I always had to shoot at my own people.'" (Tawil-Souri 2007: 545). What is remarkable here, for those unfamiliar with such societies (or parts of their own society), is that a 12-year-old girl in Jenin has already at that age accumulated enough experience of playing American and/or European-produced first-person shooters, to be able to discuss their differences with the pro-Arab games Souri was studying. This single remark is enough to challenge, and correct, many unconscious Orientalising assumptions about Arab youth in general, and Arab girls in particular.

Her comment inevitably raises another question : not just what was it like, but how was it "possible" for a young Palestinian girl to take pleasure in "shooting Arabs", albeit in a video game ? Yet one of the main characteristics of video games is that roles are always interchangeable, even reversible. In Counter-Strike (1999), for example, one of the most successful online games of all time, and a stalwart of the Palestinian Internet cafés I visited in 2003–2004, players have to periodically exchange roles : one moment they are part of a counter-terrorist commando, the next they are one of the terrorists. As Mathieu Triclot has pointed out in his recent study of the philosophy of video games, however aggressive these games may be, they do not divide the worlds they produce up according to some essential qualities, such as good and evil, which might imply, or even command, a persisting identification. The experience they produce is one of fear, hyper-alertness, but also constant confusion. To enter into the game, the player does not need to accept an ideology, or strike a position on national or international politics. All they have to do is engage with the basic binary structure of Team A against Team B. This essential reversibility is well illustrated by the ease with which the game Quest for Saddam (2003) was repurposed by the Global Islamic Media Front as Quest for Bush (2006), with only minimal adjustments : "The two games are strictly identical in their mechanisms, the maps and the environments are left unchanged, all that is changed are the way the sets are dressed, and the "skins" of the enemies – that is, the flat areas of colour applied to the polygons" (Triclot 2011: 199).

But as Triclot is at pains to point out throughout his text, a video game is not just a structure (dispositif). It is also, indeed above all, a means for inducing certain experiences in the player, for producing "ludic states". Hence his proposal that we replace, or supplement, the Anglo-Saxon school of game studies, which focuses on the rules, gameplays, and narratives of video games, with a school of "play studies", which would focus on what the player makes of the game, how she experiences it, and also on what the game makes of the player – how it influences and shapes her subjectivity.[5]

From the point of view of play studies, the true politics of gaming cannot, therefore, be reduced to a matter of who is designated as the enemy (Arabs, Israelis, or Americans ?), or even of what rules and criteria are deployed in order to distinguish between enemy and friend. The real politics of the medium which gave us Call of Duty and World of Warcraft lies in the way in which it initiates us into a world in which even as we pursue the illusion of mastering and shaping our environment, we are shaped by it to see the world in terms of actionable information, and our selves as bundles of quantitative indicators. The defining output of so much play is not just more happiness for the players, or more profits for the companies that design and market the games : it is more people who have

trained themselves to fit into an environment that is defined by "this sought-after adjustment: subjectivities defined in terms of parameters, the desire to optimize those parameters, and a state of infinite activity that carries on from task to task" (224).

When we play video games, we think we are just playing. But in fact, Triclot argues, we are learning to work – to become subjects that are entirely at home in the world of digital transnational capitalism. This is a world in which the computer is the centre and the measure of all things – in which all decisions should be answerable to models which, however seductively analogue, can all ultimately be reduced to binary code.

And yet, within and behind and around these signals of subjection, there is a lot of noise. A video game, like any kind of game, may at moments function as a part of such a system. But as an experience, it is not a system, merely an "assembly of disjointed subjectivities" (217). A space in which there are not just rules and narratives, but play and metaphor, too. A space in which there is space not only for critique, but also for invention. For forms and meanings that break with the past. For the emergence of something new.

2

Through this simple gesture of inscribing the words "Game over Mubarak" into the urban environment of Cairo, the language of the video game leaves the confines of the screen and begins to invade offline reality. The tag applied to the base of the lion at the west end of Qasr el-Nil bridge in the photograph reproduced above, the contrast between the texture of spray paint and stone, has the knack of making that process of occupation seem almost tangible.[6] But what if it was the sign of a shift that is more than just linguistic? What if it was an indication that, for the revolutionaries who deployed this symbol, reality itself was becoming "playable"? That for them, the world was no longer a closed system, with a single correct outcome, but a place where meanings were plastic, and roles reversible, and where their actions might indeed be able to influence the outcome of events?

Recent debate about the shift from video games as an activity which takes place in a separate space from everyday reality, to gaming as an integral part of everyday reality, has revolved around the notion of gamification. This is the idea that since people find video games completely absorbing, but have difficulty experiencing the same level of commitment and attention in other areas of life (e.g. work), the answer might be, not to ask why workers are alienated under the regime of globalized capitalism, but to import some of the more obvious features of video games into everyday life, in order to stimulate people to get more "involved".

As first set out by Byron Reeves and J. Leighton Read (2009), and followed up by Gave Zicherman and Joselin Linder (2010), among others, this proposal is eminently disappointing. The idea that people could be motivated by getting points which could be exchanged for benefits every time they brush their teeth, give up their seat on the bus for an old age pensioner, or exceed their hourly data input targets, seems too naive to be taken seriously. As Margaret Robertson has pointed out, what Reeves and Read are really calling for is not the gamification of reality, but its "pointsification" (Robertson 2010) – the introduction of a system of rewards and penalties more reminiscent of some kind of Social-Darwinian primary school than of playing Grand Theft Auto.[7] As Triclot puts it, "Gamification is often accompanied by the lauding of the power of games and their players, but in fact it rests upon an attitude of total contempt for the medium, which it reduces to a Pavlovian mechanism. In order for a game to be interesting, the decisions we take in the course of it must influence the outcome. (…) But instead gamification aims to dispossess us of our power to make decisions, of our ability to act upon the world and the frameworks through which we perceive it." (Triclot 2011: 234)

Yet while Triclot is critical of this reductive approach to infusing the experience of video gaming into everyday reality, he argues that the convergence of gaming and everyday life is nevertheless inevitable, thanks to the proliferation of small mobile screens, and the increasing role they play in structuring our lives and forming our experience of the world. The question then is not so much whether we want gamification, as what we might want gamification to mean. "Could we not imagine", he asks, "that the same mechanisms might be used to produce games that are really games, that is, which would increase our power to act collectively on the world, rather than destroying it?" (234).

Or to put it another way : what would the gamification of everyday life look like if it were not a top-down process, designed by Ivy League professors, IT entrepreneurs and military commanders, but a bottom-up process, produced and implemented by the people themselves?

I would like to propose that the Arab revolutions, with their omnipresent camera-phones, and their sophisticated use of a range of technologies - including geo-localization (for knowing who has been arrested, and where they are

being held)[8], and even the creation of a state of "dual Internet" in order to get round state-imposed black-outs[9] - produced a generalized fusion of new and ancient media[10] that goes well beyond the popular icons of elite activists well-versed in social media and equipped with latest-model laptops, and in doing so provides us with a pretty good picture of what such a "people's gamification" might look like.[11]

As we should expect, this gamification of reality is not simply the replication of existing forms of game experience in a new place, but their disruptive transformation and reinvention, in response to unforeseen opportunities offered by the new environment. So when the Arab revolutionaries left their PC screens and internet cafés to move out into the world, they took with them their experience of symbolic universes that could be acted upon. But they also transformed those universes, in order to inscribe them into the world around them. One of the most remarkable of those transformations is clearly displayed in the slogan, "Game Over Mubarak", itself. Because in choosing to make that slogan theirs, the revolutionaries were not identifying themselves as the players of a game. Instead, they were identifying their enemy, Mubarak, as the solitary player, still trapped in the 1980s arcade where the shoot'em-up at the Stadium had brought him to power.[12] And they were speaking to him with the voice that, in our time, is the voice of destiny: the voice of the machine. When the people brought the video game out into the street, they did not identify with the special ops commando, or the terrorist he pursued. They identified with the computer.

Of course, this sounds paradoxical: that the mass of young people who overthrew Mubarak and Ben Ali should identify with something as lifeless and artificial as a Windows box, just at that moment when they might seem themselves to be finally coming alive. (And it is hard to interpret the proliferation not only of videos, but also of photographs, paintings, poems, songs, and other forms of self-expression released by these revolutions in their happier moments as anything other than an overflowing of a long-repressed vitality). But then, we have to understand that the identification of the most vital and most powerful of the forces inside them and around them with this complex, not immediately empathetic, calculating machine, is not just an assertion of the power of the gaming experience. It is also a critique of that experience. Or rather, it is a message from somewhere deep in the unconscious of the computer. For as Triclot writes, in a slightly different context, "Online (multiplayer) games represent a form of classless society, not because there are no poor, no proletarians in the world they depict, but because the position of the poor and the proletariat is played by the machine." (225, my emphasis).[13]

So in making the slogan "Game Over Mubarak" their own, the revolutionaries were not necessarily embracing or rejecting the video game culture. They were making its unconscious speak. They were not simply dictating to their soon-to-be former dictator that his time was up, they were also showing the world what the video games we have been playing have repressed for all these years: the point of view of the machine, which is also the point of view of the people. By identifying with the object that is this machine, they made themselves visible as what they had always been all along: the only possible subject of their own history.

So we might translate the hidden message of the slogan under the lion's tail, then, as: "We are the machine". A paradox, as I said. But apparent paradox is one of the more constant characteristics of the language of revolution. One has only to think of the famous slogan of the 2001 uprising in Algeria, "You cannot kill us, we are already dead" (Semprun 2001: 10). Such metaphorical statements go far beyond the attempt to characterize experience indirectly; they represent the outright rejection of the normal, given categories by which we live, or try to live. They refuse to recognize the frame that has been applied to the world on our behalf as in any way adequate to what we are actually going through, let alone what we need to go through in order to change that world.[14]

In this case, behind the joke on the ageing President who can't even win a stupid video game, lies something much graver. By identifying with the machine, that incarnation of the fatality inherent in bureaucratic society, the people invest themselves with the aura of an impersonal, superhuman force. The individual who is carried by, and carries within herself, the masses, feels that force as something equivalent to justice, that is, as something sacred. She is the agent of destiny, and it is destiny which speaks through her. Game over, Mubarak. The force which had been crushing them for decades, centuries, was finally, briefly, diverted to crush, or at least to wash away, the tyrant in his turn.

Of course, this is not the kind of gamification of reality which the experts, entrepreneurs, and authorities would like to see. But it is the way in which the video game as experience already seems to be leaking out into the world. Even if the results of the last three years of these revolutions may in some places seem as terribly ironic as the end of a game of Metal Gear Solid 2, they have at least demonstrated one thing: that playing video games round the clock, even those games in which Arabs can only appear as threats and/or targets, has perhaps taught the generation of Arab youth that made these revolutions less about the inevitability of submission - whether to authoritarian corruption, or to capitalist self-discipline - than about the possibilities of their own rebellion.[15]

Endnotes

1. The phrase seems to have emerged towards the end of the Tunisian revolution, as for example in a much-reproduced photograph taken during the last days of the demonstrations on Avenue Bourguiba that precipitated Ben Ali's flight (Chrisafis and Black 2011). A number of Egyptian uses of the slogan are collected by Taahir (2011). From there it spread to Libya (O'Reilly n.d.); Syria (Associated Press 2012); and Bahrain (Anderson n.d.). For Yemen, I have only found examples at protests outside the country, for instance in Kuala Lumpur (Windsor Star 2011).

2. The use of the phrase "Game Over" dates back at least to the pinball machines of the 1950s. It reached its apotheosis in the arcade video games of the 1980s, but has persisted into some more recent, console-based games, even those that take a somewhat less final view of failure. For the history, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Game_over (accessed June 9, 2014). Some sources claim that the phrase was already in common usage in billiard parlours in the US before pinball machines became popular: see the discussion at http://languagelog.ldc.upenn.edu/nll/?p=2933 (accessed June 9, 2014).

3. See, again, the discussion at http://languagelog.ldc.upenn.edu/nll/?p=2933. Possible conduits to the Middle East, beside arcade games and their domestic videogame successors, include various Hollywood movies where the phrase figures in significant moments of dialogue, most notably Ridley Scott's Aliens (1986), as well as the Saw franchise (2004–10), and the Japanese action movie Battle Royale (2000). The status of the phrase as a global linguistic icon of quasi-meaningless Anglo-Americana is perhaps best enshrined in the lyrics of "Metal Milkshake" by the parodic Brazilian heavy metal band Massacration, which simply pile up a series of nouns which one may assume are instantly recognisable almost anywhere in the (young, urban) world: "Hot-dog / milkshake / Sunday / Mayday :: People / table / walkman / umbrella :: Round one / Fight / Final lap / Start :: Game over / Playstation / Atari".

4. This paragraph is partly based on my own first-hand experience as a regular user of internet cafés both in Egypt, while living there in 1997–2000, and during repeated visits to Palestine in 2003 and 2004. The ambience is well captured in a scene from Laurent van Lancker's film, Trente et une nuits, mes rencontres palestiniennes (2003), shot in the same internet café in Ramallah which I used as a base, where at least 90% of the clients at all times of day and night were school kids and young men playing first-person shooter games.

5. For a fuller discussion of Triclot's approach to the gaming experience, see my extended review (in French) of his book (Snowdon 2013). All translations in this article are my own.

6. The translitteration of Mubarak as "Mubark" suggests, unintentionally, and beyond any phonetic differences, that the imperious lion has himself already been demoted to a somewhat less impressive dog. However, while this interpretation might seem in keeping with the lions' Orientalist origins (they were sculpted in 1873 by the French animal specialist Henri Alfred Jacquemart), it belies the place they occupy in the affections of Cairo's inhabitants, who have tended to see these tutelary spirits as being on their side in their battles with the regime. See, for instance, the eyepatch which they wore later in 2011, thus identifying them with those revolutionaries whose eyes had been put out by snipers (Gillard and Wells 2011).

7. "What we're currently terming gamification is in fact the process of taking the thing that is least essential to games and representing it as the core of the experience. Points and badges have no closer a relationship to games than they do to websites and fitness apps and loyalty cards." (Robertson 2010)

8. One Egyptian activist who was arrested during the 18 days told me, during a long conversation about which mobile phone to buy (I was thinking of changing mine), that he had two main criteria for choosing a cellphone, and that one of these was that it have GPS, so that he could instantly message his exact location to his friends and the media the next time he found himself in gaol.

9. Access to the Internet from Egypt was effectively shut down from 27 January to 2 February 2011. Some of the ways in which hackers inside and outside the country sought to get around this blackout are detailed in Noirfalisse (2011). Internet censorship in Syria, meanwhile, has become an almost constant feature of the last three years of revolutionary action (Franceschi-Bicchierai 2014).

10. The reemergence of traditional and popular art forms into the spaces created by these revolutions has been a constant feature of their unfolding, tho one much less remarked upon in the West than their willingness to adopt and repurpose the latest IT gadgets (El-Desouky 2011, forthcoming; Bamyeh 2013).

11. The first two technologies mentioned in this paragraph mirror the two basic visual elements of many video games, namely: the combination of the immersive first-person POV (cameraphone) with the synoptic overview of the territory (GPS/Google Maps). The way these similarities (and the disruptive differences that counterbalance them) have been manifested in YouTube videos from the region will form the subject of a separate study.

12. Egyptian President Anwar Sadat was assassinated on 6 October 1981 while observing a military parade at Cairo Stadium. Mubarak, at the time his vice-president, was at his side, but escaped with only minor injuries (a serendipitous event which subsequently furnished the starting point for countless vernacular conspiracy

theories). The Speaker of the People's Assembly, Sufi Abu Taleb, became Acting head of state on Sadat's death, until Mubarak was formally inducted as the new President of Egypt on 14 October.

13. Triclot makes this point in the course of a discussion of massive multi-player online role-playing games (MMORPGs), where the proliferation of avatars/players seems designed to give the illusion that the whole of society is present, or at least represented. But the equation "machine = proletariat" clearly applies mutatis mutandis to all video games in which the machine is responsible for generating and sustaining the world in which we, the privileged, play, whether it also generates the "players" that we play against, or simply produces a functional environment in which we can play against each other.

14. On the Arab revolutions as above all Kuhnian epistemological revolutions that have called forth new acts of (anarchist) gnosis, see Bamyeh 2013.

15. I would like to thank Hani Shukrallah, Samah Selim, Hallveig Agudsdottir, Remco Roes, and Mathieu Triclot for their encouragement and comments at various stages during the process of writing this essay.

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Facts, Fantasies, and New Online Sociopolitical Interpassivity

Nathan Greenslit

In the U.S. media we often see left-wing frustration with how facts often fail to trump right-wing punditry. This is notably parodied on The Daily Show, whose correspondents might stare dumbfoundedly wide-eyed at their (often politically conservative) interviewees who flatly deny statistics or other quantitative data that contradict their worldview. The Daily Show uses such segments to cathartically sublimate political disagreement into laughable disbelief at an opponent's intellectual obstinance. The humor depends on the conceit of a world divided into unambiguous facts and "rationality" on the one side and manipulative delusions and "irrationality" on the other. This bifurcation goes beyond fodder for comedy. There is now a many-decades-long history of psychological and neuroscientific investigations of how individuals of different political leanings perceive the world along the putative rational / irrational dividing line, from the McCarthy-era notion of the "totalitarian personality" to the more contemporary notion of the "right-wing brain." That such research itself seems to be born of political agendas has not gone unnoticed, as not-too-subtly indicated by the subtitle of a 2008 Slate article: "Why Is Every Neuropundit Such a Raging Liberal?"

Similarly, it is not hard to find websites devoted to displaying how "idiots" have mistaken parody for real-world news. One site reproduced the following exchange that took place on Facebook: "Instagram now belongs to Facebook that belongs to the CIA. Every photo you take on instagram from now on belongs to the CIA and can be used for whatever they seek fit." The post included a video segment from theonion.com to back up the claim. One response snarked, "dude thats from the onion you retard … its a comedy website," following up with links to Wikipedia's entry on The Onion. The author of the original post interrogated back: "What makes it fake? Their stories aren't on the mainstream? Cause its on the internet? Mainstream media will never cover stories like that. There [are] soooo many stories that the mainstream doesn't and won't ever cover." The increasingly exasperated interlocutor responded: "IT'S A FUCKING COMEDY WEBSITE. it's fake because those are actors they make up all the stories. Read the Wikipedia page I sent you." The original poster concluded, "I've always learned not to trust wiki for credible info lol."

This exchange is nearly structured like a Marx Brothers joke, with vaudevillian timing in which apparent stupidity that takes the form of a literal misinterpretation ends up turning the tables on a supposedly more rational grip on reality; its clever triumph exposes the core circuit of meaning in a social interaction—in this case, agreement that the Internet should not be trusted as a source of authority about the Internet. On the one hand, The Onion's news segment, while fake, does not stray from the reality that social network sites like Facebook do in fact gather a plethora of data concerning online behaviors (so-called "Big Data") which could make the government's job of surveilling us that much easier. (As the adage goes, just because you are paranoid doesn't mean that you are wrong.) On the other hand, The Onion's fakeness in this case became a pretense to deride and dismiss somebody who worried what its news segment might have revealed about the real world.

Reaction to The Onion story was not a straightforward case of gullible people buying into obvious falsehoods, so much as people identifying real-world justification for their own beliefs and fears; the story was credible because it was validating. Reaction to The Onion piece also shows how effective parody cuts both ways, that is, as funny to those in on the joke, but for whom the humor is possible only insofar as they've identified some core truth to it ("I

can totally imagine the CIA checking our Instagram photos!"), and as truthful to those who already believe in its premise, but who are thus unlikely to find it humorous ("I knew the CIA was checking our Instagram photos!"). For both the believer and nonbeliever, the parody reaffirms the truth of their convictions.

Philosopher Slavoj Žižek has argued that this is precisely how ideology functions. Ideology is different from "false consciousness" in the strict Marxian sense of an underclass systematically duped into accepting as natural its disadvantaged social position. Rather, ideology is how we convince ourselves about reality. As Žižek puts it, ideology "... is not of an illusion masking the real state of things but that of an (unconscious) fantasy structuring our social reality itself." (1989:33) In this framework, how we affirm our beliefs does not so much blind us from reality or allow us an escape from it, so much as articulate what we already feel to be true of the world. Throughout his literary career Mark Twain seemed to have found himself up against that very tension, as he had to quit more than one newspaper position because his satire was repeatedly taken as actual news. As he diagnosed the situation, "A lie can travel halfway around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes."

But what makes the lie in this sense so sticky? The circulation of parodic news stories as authentic is not new, and its history certainly predates the Internet as part of the social work of folklore (especially the transmission of mythologies concerning a social group's origins), including urban legend (apocryphal stories that are often retold as having 'actually' happened to oneself or one's acquaintances). Interrogating the 'realness' of such stories has since been taken up by the modern-day entertainment industry, with TV shows like MythBusters and its recent predecessors like Beyond Belief: Fact or Fiction and Mostly True Stories: Urban Legends Revealed, all of which attempt to debunk urban legends through reenactments or scientific experiments. Culturally there is voyeuristic pleasure of watching investigators adjudicate "fact" from "fiction," which exists alongside of certain claims about the world that may seem patently dubious, but which persist nonetheless. This suggests that cultural history of parodic news intersects with the psychology of ideology, insofar as there is an important social function of punting one's views to an outside, putatively authoritative or objective source.

Fantasy Meets Cyber-tribalism

Our psychology is not independent of our social influences, and our ideologies are buttressed by the people we choose to surround ourselves with. We are not alone in our bubbles. A 2012 study from Pew Internet found that nearly 20% of social network site users had blocked, unfriended, or 'hid' someone as a result of political disagreement. The consequence, the study argued, is that social network users craft their friends like an "echo chamber" – reinforcing relationships with people who share their beliefs and shunning those who don't.

Insofar as their propagation of news (real or fake) can generate a personalized world of facts (or factoids), social networks offer us an important case study of the sociology of ideology. Indeed, the online echo chamber phenomenon evokes the "psychological group" that Freud described in Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego (1921), which he claimed was characterized by "mental homogeneity" given the reciprocal influence that its members exert on each other, and the emotional charge that intensifies through mutual interaction, including increased disciplining of dissent. In a virtual environment where social networks are constantly pruned to reflect shared ideology, it is unsurprising to see such reciprocal influence.

Freud's essay draws from the observations of French sociologist Gustave Le Bon, who posited "the psychological group" as an entity that transmuted individuals into a collective mind that basically turns each into a different person than were he or she alone. Le Bon uses language like "contagion" and "suggestibility" and "hypnotized" to characterize how ideas and affects spread among the group, to emphasize what little cognitive resistance is offered up by the individuals who comprise it.

Freud interprets the infectious group mindset as opportunism for the individual's unconscious desires. The group generates conditions in which the taboo or aggressive desires of an individual can be more freely expressed -- that is to say, less repressed. An important consequence of the untethered fantasy life enabled by group psychology is decreased capacity for putatively rational thought:

> [G]roups have never thirsted after truth. They demand illusions, and cannot do without them. They constantly give what is unreal precedence over what is real; they are almost as strongly influenced by what is untrue as by what is true. They have an evident tendency not to distinguish between the two.

For Freud, groups are therefore quintessentially psychoneurotic insofar as they substitute fantasies for realities.

It could be argued that online groups are all the more so psychoneurotic, as they not only suffer these general characteristics of group psychology, but because they are comprised of individuals whose participation in the group is based on the computer interface — a fantastical screen to begin with. Online presentation of self involves social role playing that goes beyond our in-person, putative "real life" presentation of self. We enact fantasies online, whether this means adopting a new persona or avatar, or hurling inflammatory comments under the shield of anonymity, or even 'merely' being voyeurs into the lives of others. In all cases, we get to act on / act out fantasy. In a psychoanalytic framework, it would seem that our unconscious urges are all the more so given expression online than in person, since the social strictures of the virtual world offer us a less intimidating reality principle to negotiate. It is easier to insult somebody online than to their flesh-and-blood face. It is this new fantastical psychological group that must be contested with in terms of how facts are generated and circulated and sustained.

Here's one example: On September 24, 2013, the website for Popular Science announced that it would no longer allow readers to post comments to their articles. They cited "recent research" that hyperbolic comments can bias how a reader interprets the 'facts' of a story, and argued their rationale in terms of its "logical end," namely that "... commenters shape public opinion; public opinion shapes public policy; public policy shapes how and whether and what research gets funded—you start to see why we feel compelled to hit the 'off' switch." Popular Science's decision to remove their comments section is part of a long history concerning the social construction of scientific knowledge, especially the sociopolitically-charged tensions between expertise and democracy. The magazine's decision betrays its own ideology about the science and civic participation, namely that there are cold, hard facts about the world (in this case, scientific) that must be curated by an expert class (who is presumably less susceptible to the false consciousness of an intellectual underclass). Unlike the fake Onion story that some readers took seriously, this is an example of a real science news story that some readers refused to take seriously. But in both cases we see an important perversion of the tantalizing quip that "everybody is entitled to their own opinions, but not their own facts." Ironically, the dupes of the fake Onion story may be better attuned to the reality of government surveillance that the story was joking about. And the Popular Science editors justify their decision to eliminate comments by arguing that, even if it happens circuitously through public policy and political agendas, opinion can indeed ultimately shape how fact is generated. So, they conclude, to protect fact, you may just have to suppress public opinion about it.

There is yet a third case, whose consequences are not any less unsettling for the hope of a democratic social construction of fact. In early November 2013, mainstream media and online social networks alike were trending coverage of a scary and infuriating crime called "the knockout game," in which youths in urban settings randomly assault unsuspecting individuals, supposedly with the goal of rendering them unconscious with a single sucker-punch. My own Facebook feed was peppered with morally outraged and vengeful comments about this behavior. On the one hand these assaults are real, opprobrious crimes. On the other hand it is not clear that they are part of any sort of newly depraved trend. Crime statistics would suggest both that this particular form of assault is not new, is quite rare compared to other violent crimes, and that it is not becoming more frequent. But the story has spread online with an indignant furor that does not jive with these facts. But as we've seen, this is ideology in the flesh, insofar as a number of people have already fantasized-interpreted the knockout attacks as unambiguous evidence of a "spreading" crime wave of blacks against whites. The dangers here are of course sociopolitical as much as psychological; the racial overtones of online reaction to "knockout game" are part of a long history in the U.S. of moral panic around urban black youths.

Cyber-tribalism Meets Interpassivity

More insidiously, once online we may very well be subjected to algorithms that idiosyncratically shape what we see online based on our prior searching, linking, and 'liking' behaviors. As Eli Pariser, former director of MoveOn has described it, these algorithms are based on what we want to know, not necessarily what we need to know. He recalls an experiment between two friends who did separate Google searches for "Egypt" on their respective computers. One got a front page of links to news stories about the protests there, while the other got a bunch of travel links and pictures of pyramids. Pariser preempted the knee-jerk defense of the corporate advertiser—"We are just giving people what they want"—by asking, "Well, what do you mean by 'what we want'?" He noted that we are all subject to multiple and often conflicting 'wants,' questioning the wisdom of algorithms that may very well

reinforce transient or superficial desires at the expense of providing content that is critical to informed democratic participation. Pariser worries that, rather than there being a more democratic collectivization of information (in which searches are perhaps ranked by the overall popularity of websites), there is increased fragmentation in how we view the world via the Internet. Our democratic ties to each other are arguably weakened, in part because our perception of the world gets automatically skewed towards our own individualized fantasies.

It is useful to think of social networks and search engines as desiring machines, insofar as they are externalizations of our fantasies perhaps in the manner that Žižek (1994) describes the "interpassive" externalization of belief (hired funeral weepers, prayer wheels, canned laugh tracks). However, letting a sitcom's laugh track do the psychological work of enjoyment for us is different than the personal 'likeability' of information deciding on your behalf the future information you will encounter. Online personalization thus turns out to a more insidious form of interpassivity, especially as it happens under the noses of those of us under the ideological conceit of social media as the great grassroots populist opposition to centralized forms of governance. Online algorithms surreptitiously help construct our social echo chambers as they reinforce our personal fantasies about the world. This is a socialized form of ideology perhaps already articulated by the playfully cynical 17th-century writer François La Rochefoucauld: "We should not be upset that others hide the truth from us, when we hide it so often from ourselves."

Chomsky or Žižek?

Fact versus fantasy; truth versus propaganda; rationality versus emotions—these are some of the bifurcations we indulge when we fight with each other. We don't want to be stuck between the Popular Science model (no dialogue, arguably undemocratic) and the desiring-machine model (echo chambers and the winnowing of civically critical information). But we seem to find ourselves somewhere between the critiques of Noam Chomsky, who tirelessly articulates how mainstream media—even if while on paper is operating "objectively"—systematically neglects to provide citizenry with facts pertaining to the illegal and egregious activities of its government; and the critiques of Žižek, who argues that the psychological life of ideology works precisely to thwart, ignore, twist, or otherwise obfuscate what is presented as supposedly objective about the world. It is in this sense that psychoanalytic philosophy offers a more sobering pronouncement of life online: It is hard to trump our deep convictions about the world; the inner life of desire and fantasy is often more resilient than external 'facts.'

The resilience of conviction resonates with historian of science Thomas Kuhn's 1960 seminal work The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, which explored how the progress of scientific knowledge is not some idyllic, enlightened accumulation of facts that speak for themselves. Rather, changes in scientific paradigms (e.g. buying into the idea that the earth travels around the sun and not the other way around) are characterized by infighting and stubborn clinginess to older theories—even in the face of 'the facts.' Sometimes it is simply a matter of the old guard literally dying off for new ideas to take hold. Similarly, today, if achieving political accord were a simple matter of "showing the truth," then presumably it would be effortless to have widespread consensus without resorting to philosopher kings. But clearly that's not the case. Moreover, the 'truth' of the core facts that we carry around with us as indisputable (like that the earth travels around the sun and not the other way around) is more derived from group consensus than from individual scientific deduction. How many of us—off the top of our heads—could actually prove that the earth travels around the sun? Not many. It would seem that, despite ourselves, we are all inhabited by what The Daily Show alum Stephen Colbert coined "truthiness"—not infallible proof that something is correct, but rather the (socially-given) conviction that something is correct.

This is not to say that we should snub the basic premise of Chomsky's propaganda model, namely that if only people would see the facts, then we would have a saner society. After all, consider the now infamous 1969 internal tobacco industry memo regarding the link between smoking and lung cancer: "Doubt is our product, since it is the best means of competing with the 'body of fact' that exists in the minds of the general public. It is also the means of establishing a controversy." This is more than simply lying about a product. It is about generating the very process of doubting. Such duplicitous strategies to reengineer facts as factious should be exposed by our best investigative journalism and be widely disseminated without algorithmic filtering online—even if at the same time we heed a psychoanalytically-informed ideology model, because apparently seeing the facts is not enough. So we need to challenge the political economy of mainstream media à la Chomsky but we cannot be so naive as to think that facts will save us from ideology. In the meantime, we must come to terms with how ideology gets debunked in public

venues like The Daily Show, whose tactics against stubborn convictions would seem to follow Groucho Marx's insult: "He may look like an idiot and talk like an idiot but don't let that fool you. He really is an idiot."

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The Construction and Demonization of the Lazybones

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I know that many ward managers sometimes feel frustration when people look into their office and say 'All right, there she is sitting at her computer again. Wonder what she's doing? Is she on the Internet or what?' (Hospital ward manager quoted in Rosengren & Ottosson 2007:162)

Introduction

What constitutes work is not always clearly defined and what may be regarded as diligent work performance in some contexts may be viewed as idleness and passivity in others. Further, the societal norms that regulate our perception of work are temporally, spatially and socially unstable; an ambiguity that, in comparison to previous epochs, probably has increased as people's movements between various social, cultural and geographical contexts have increased. Within this motion, we exist and are influenced by various work ethics. The ward manager, interviewed at a Swedish emergency ward, suspects that the staff believe she spends work time surfing the Internet, so called cyber-loafing or cyber-slacking. She worries that they may feel she lacks work ethics or, even worse, that she is lazy. We probably all recognize the ward manager's feeling of frustration.

The present article addresses the building of norms that govern and regulate work and working life. We argue that it is necessary to view the individual work place and the organization's norms in a broader context, and to see them as part of a societal system of norms. This article focuses the linguistic metaphors and symbolic actions that are at once a manifestation of, are active in the creation of, and a vehicle for work norms. We subscribe to a discourse analytical approach and argue that our linguistic expressions correspond to our thoughts and social practices and thereby govern how we understand and categorize our surrounding world (Fairclough 1992; Lakoff & Johnson 2003; Larsson 2012). In other words, our language does not only inform our thoughts but also which thoughts are possible to think and, as a consequence, which actions are possible to carry out. Simultaneously, linguistic expressions are context-bound and tied to specific situations. We will, therefore, take our starting point in the argument that our way of relating to work and work time fetches its sustenance from contemporary norms and that it is possible to observe the same system of norms active at different system levels. The ward manager's experience, therefore, is based in the same norm system that allows an unemployed person to feel "useless."

It should also be noted that although the article addresses a general problem, the text is written from a Swedish perspective. Finally, we use empirical examples retrieved from the Swedish election in 2010 which highlight active attempts to manipulate and reinforce certain norms.

Work

In the article "Time and the Negotiation of Work–Family Boundaries" Julia Brannen (2005) reflects on the

length of work time in relation to the individual's possibilities and freedom to make her own decisions:

> Paradoxically, it seems that the more autonomy employees are given over organizing their time in work seems to mean that they are spending longer and longer at work or working. (Brannen 2005:115)

The question Brannen poses concerns why we tend to work longer working hours, bring our work home with us and read our email at home, while our opportunities for autonomy and self determination have increased. The explanation is probably multifaceted; however, our focus of interest lies primarily in those norms that support these actions.

When we observe working life in Western society, it becomes clear that not only is the work itself of key importance but so, too, are our perceptions of it. Issues such as work organization, work time and work environment are difficult to grasp unless one also observes the cultural and normative content of the work. This becomes apparent not least in the fact that historically we have spent much time and effort reflecting on our and others' labor. Aside from working, we have also created theological and political systems to manage work and the distribution of its fruits. This relationship is, perhaps, not surprising given that we, in various ways, have been dependent on work. For many, the threat of destitution has been a driving force. People have diligently invested time and their bodies in theirs' or others' agriculture, factories, workshops and households to put food on the table. For others, work has been an interesting experience while living off and exploiting others' labor (Negrey 2012).

However, as several researchers have noted, this central position enduringly occupied by work is peculiar. Despite the fact that industrial society during, in particular, the late 1900s and early 2000s resulted in a dramatic increase in productivity, we are also expected to work more and longer hours. This does not merely relate to expectations – despite the need for labor never having been as low, we work all the more (Paulsen 2013; Rifkin 2004; Schön 2012). Furthermore, it is also clear that the boundaries of work are dissipating in the wake of mobile communication solutions and social network services. Following in the trail of new technology and the digitalization of society, the previously, clearly defined boundary between work and privacy is weakening (Allvin 2011; Berkowsky 2013; Bittman et al. 2009). Paulsen (2013) argues that as productivity increases, work tends to expand and remain so throughout life, in practice. When more time becomes potential work time and more rooms becomes potential work spaces, we become increasingly exposed to work norms which, it may be reasonably assumed, also influence how work time is perceived at the individual level. This could explain Brannen's (2005) conclusion that we tend to work more as our autonomy increases. This can also be linked to Madeleine Bunting's (2005) extended and pertinent book title, Willing Slaves: How the Overwork Culture is Ruling Our Lives. However, this is not to say that this image of the central role of work is undisputed. Coincidentally, as work has come into the scope of both society's and the individual's focus, we have also attempted to delimit the extent of work. This has occurred in a political arena in the form of legislation and agreements, but there has also been a general perception that there is a need for a better balance between work and leisure. In one survey, for example, a majority of Sweden's population responded that they would prefer reduced work time to increased wages and consumption (Anxo 2009; Sanne 2007). Historically, increased productivity has been used to reduce work time, thereby increasing society's temporal welfare (Mulgan 2005). The first legislated work time restriction in Sweden can be traced back to 1920 (Ottosson & Rosengren 2007) and a gradual decline in the number of worked hours can thereafter be seen during the remaining part of the twentieth century and up until 1973, when the 40-hour work week was fully implemented (Anxo 2009).

At the same time, the situation is complicated by the fact that work is not merely increasing in extent and invading leisure time but that leisure time all the more frequently leeks into work time. As the former, strict division between work and leisure grows lax (Allvin et al. 2011), in part due to digital technology (Berkowsky 2013), "empty labor" emerges in which we, during work hours, for instance listen to music, attend to private correspondence, and follow Internet auctions (Paulsen 2013). Research points out in part an increased boundlessness, in part a positive relationship between ICT, and both "negative home-work spillover" as well as "negative work-home spillover" (Berkowsky 2013).

From Welfare to Work

The work time paradox is also articulated in the explicitly political sphere. We are expected to work more and longer hours. Despite the increase in productivity, political successes today are measured by the number of

jobs created and hours worked. This, of course, relates to the need to achieve a politically acceptable distribution of welfare; it relates to maintaining the funding of the state and public sector via payroll taxes: it relates to the management of demographic changes, but it also relates to societal work norms and, in the final analysis, a view of humanity (Paulsen 2013).

In political terms, the concepts of workfare and welfare are commonly used to express the two political, rhetorical systems that govern welfare and labor market policy. In short, workfare (work for your welfare) can be expressed as being based in the distribution of resources depending on the individual's work performance or work ethic, while welfare takes its starting point in that the state or society has a responsibility to ensure that the individual, irrespective of any participation in labor market policy programs, has a reasonable standard of living (Kildal 2000). Both political economic systems are, of course, more complex, however. For example, we can observe large institutional as well as cultural differences between various countries. What we denote as welfare usually also includes demands for specific activities. Within the literature, however, it is usually argued that welfare as a system differs significantly by being based in rights and possibilities, while workfare as a system is based in duty and sanctions to a greater extent (Kildal 2000). Central to the workfare perspective is the argument that too generous, undemanding and tolerant an attitude towards non-working individuals leads to passivity and counteracts personal responsibility. Workfare proponents further argue that an all too generous policy ultimately risks contributing to the buildup of a dependency culture and permanent social exclusion (Martin 2004).

Sonia Martin (2004) argues that the rise of workfare within social and labor market policy should be seen against a backdrop of the neo-liberal ideological hegemony of the 1990s, which has led to undermining the state's responsibility for the citizens' social welfare and been replaced by an increasing focus on the individual's idleness, as the explanation for economic inequalities. She argues that this has led to a displacement of the responsibility for poor social conditions from the state to individuals. Some researchers, for example David Byrne (2005), point out that within the neoliberal groove of thought, there are not only moralizing aspects but also notions of hereditary and racially contingent cultures of poverty. This naturally manifests itself differently in various countries, but the common denominator appears to be that characteristics that express otherness, for example, immigrants, the homeless, the young, blacks, welfare dependents, drug addicts, criminals and the unemployed are increasingly used to label individuals in the socially excluded "subclass" (cf. Byrne 2005; Marks 1991; Martin 2004).

According to the neoliberally influenced workfare ideology, unemployment and various other social problems are largely caused by the unwillingness of the unemployed to accept low wage employment (see, f. ex. Mead 1989). One consequence of this is that social and labor market policy thereby is directed towards creating incitements for the unemployed to accept such work. The path struck upon, therefore, is one that decreases access to, and lowers, benefits within the welfare and social security systems. Similarly to, for example, Byrne (2005), we argue that a key part of this policy has been to create a new work ethic by shaming and demonizing the unemployed.

Work Norms

The previously cited ward manager expresses how her work at the computer is reconstructed into an idle, disloyal and immoral action. Reminiscent of "the gaze of the other" (Sartre 1992), by being carried out without any transparency at the computer, work becomes non-work. Work appears here not as a given but as being dependent on the meaning it receives within its social context. In other words, to understand the situation, it becomes necessary to observe the norms and values that circumvent work and livelihood. These are key since they are crucial to the regulatory mechanisms within the individual's relationship to his work.

Norms are seen here as regulatory mechanisms in relation to explicit contracts of action such as, for example, directions for how and where to carry out work, specified work hours for when it is to be carried out or socially formulated expectancies of behavior. It is important to point out that at the core of the character of the norms that "regulate" our work performance lies a power structure in which various actors seek the privilege to interpret which norms are applicable and how they are to be understood. Several researchers also point out that the individual lives in parallel norm systems, systems which fetch nourishment from different societal contexts and situations (Rosengren 2009). Taking our point of departure in Hydén and Svensson (2008), we argue that norms essentially have three attributes which conclusively define the concept of norms. Norms are (a) guidelines for action (imperatives) which express a normative (ought) dimension; they are (b) socially reproducible and reproduced, and finally (c) they

constitute the individual's perception of the social expectations of their behavior. At the same time, norms are unstable; our view of what is morally right changes over time. Work norms are not only recreated but also created and, thus, the question becomes how this occurs. Which actors are active and how is this influence manifested? Since our social system is neither equal nor egalitarian, it is unlikely that "norm production" would be either.

Below, we discuss this process from the standpoint of "diligence." One of the ways in which diligence materializes and becomes a guideline for action in contemporary Western working life, we argue, is in the willingness and readiness for long work hours. The question thereby concerns how this guideline for action is manifested and how it is produced and reproduced.

Norms and Power

Even if norm systems are constructed with the assistance of the use of language and actions within interpersonal interaction, the ability and capacity to influence and alter is not equally distributed. Different actors have access to different resources and from that perspective, it could be said that some actors wield more power over language and the development and construction of the norm system than do others. Organizations in working life, such as trade unions and employer's organizations, political parties and media companies, have other opportunities to communicate meaning-making guidelines for action that lie beyond the average citizen in the form of physical actions, images or text that inform on "what is possible" and what is "deviant." Power, with regards to norms, therefore concerns the possibility to "set the agenda" in that certain lines of thought become dominant (Lukes 2008). This exercise of power is expressed at various system levels. Previously, we discussed the ward manager's frustration (the individual level) and the formulation of and argumentation for the various welfare and/or labor market policy systems, i.e., welfare and workfare (social level). A corresponding process can be seen when corporations and organizations (organizational level), through management, attempt to influence the employees behavior and norms (e.g., Alvesson & Wilmott 2002).

With regards to work time norms, it can be noted that both the way in which working time is organized and its symbolic expressions have changed. The factory whistles no longer sound, working schedules are becoming increasingly individualized and, according to Julia Brannen (2005), the outer control over working hours has been replaced by an inner control. In connection with this turn in the motivation to work, Brödner and Forslin (2002) use the concept "self-managed intensity". Using Norbert Elias' terms, this shift from an outer control to an inner control could be seen as part of a greater transformation process that Western civilization has been undergoing during modern times.

> [...] we see clearly how the compulsion arising directly from the threat of weapons and physical force has gradually diminished, and how those forms of dependency, which lead to the regulation of the affects in the form of self-control, have gradually increased. (Elias 2000:157)

Meanwhile, as people in modern society have come to increase their control over their emotions, control over their work has been internalized – a process that must be seen as highly profitable for capitalists, as it has partly rendered supervision of the worker obsolete.

In order to comprehend why people, under certain circumstances, tend to work long hours in the absence of external restrictions, we consider other forms of control than that which takes form in external force: a more subtle form of control aimed at the employee's soul (Wilmott 1993). This form of control – the management of emotions – can also be viewed in Elias' extended context, which comprises the whole of society:

> In a number of societies there are attempts to establish a social regulation and management of the emotions far stronger and more conscious than the standard prevalent hitherto, a pattern of moulding that imposes renunciations and transformation of drives in individuals with vast consequences for human life which are scarcely foreseeable as yet (Elias 2000:158)

From this point of view, a norm system is something that can be manipulated to achieve certain goals – rendering explicit regulations and direct surveillance obsolete. Hence, working life development could be seen as a shift from external and visible constraint to internal and invisible constraint, the latter constraint being administrated by the individuals themselves. In describing this process, Michel Foucault expressed that "[…] it is this inversion of visibility in the functioning of the disciplines that was to assure the exercise of power even in its lowest manifestations. We are

entering the age of the infinite examination and of compulsory objectification". (Foucault 1995:189)

Economists Mats Alvesson and Hugh Willmott (2002) argue that companies manipulate corporate culture such that long working hours come to symbolize commitment and loyalty towards not just the company, but also towards colleagues. This manipulation can take the form of appealing to certain values or group affiliations. In a similar way, Sara Rutherford points to a strong masculinity ideal in her study on "the long hours culture" among British white-collar workers. In the following quotation from one of her respondents, the masculine culture is made explicit:

> [...] there was an element of macho competition over the number of hours worked. 'We had to do a presentation with only one week's notice recently and one chap worked 115 hours that week.' Said a senior director, with a certain amount of pride in his voice. (Rutherford 2001:273)

Besides the obvious reference to a not only masculine, but even macho culture, the quotation also contains a clue to how this kind of culture grows – namely through moralizing tales. Moreover, it also highlights the competitive aspects of long working hours. This is also evident in the following quotation: "We unofficially kept a league table of the people who worked the longest. The group that won were here until four in the morning." (Rutherford 2001:266).

Long Working Hours as a Means to Constitute Belonging

A norm system, however, is not a one-way street. It works in both directions in that it is constituted by human interaction, but at the same time is a precondition for any form of interaction. Here, belonging is seen as expressed – through various acts and symbols – in relation to norms and values. Thus, working hours become a way of constructing belonging and identity. If a voluntarily long workday symbolizes devotion to, responsibility for and fulfilment of one's duty towards the organization, then working time becomes a marker of personal identity. The individual describes him- or herself as desirable through fulfilment of the norms and expectations he or she identifies as embedded in the organization (Rosengren 2009).

If working hours are regarded as part of an identity-creating activity, readiness and willingness to work long hours could be seen as a way for the individual to mark his or her class. It is the dependent workers who follow detailed schedules and who arrive at and leave the workplace at the same time every day. In contrast to common workers, directors and white-collar workers are "free" to work long and irregular hours. In line with Sara Rutherford, Evitar Zerubavel argues for an interpretation based on the assumption that long working hours are a way of marking one's status.

> It should be noted that, given the markedly distinct temporal profile of the professional commitments associated with high social status, high-ranking officials very often arrive at work "early" and leave "late" for the purely symbolic purpose of displaying their high status! (Zerubavel 1985:153)

According to Zerubavel, a pattern of behaviour characterized by early arrivals to and late departures from work symbolizes a person's social status as (seemingly) being devoted and loyal to the company and its goals.

In the form industrial society has been shaped into during the 1800s and 1900s, work time and capital have been a critical point of conflict; a conflict that has been waged at various levels. From instructions and the formulation of work regulations at individual work places to a more comprehensive struggle for how the citizen should dispose of his time in order to best serve society or the nation. The individual's time expenditure is thereby linked to moral perceptions of how the good citizen ought to behave. The perception of long work hours as necessary for society's wellbeing is therefore a historical continuum. In industrial-capitalist society, a work ideology was prevalent which prescribed that work was a "good, human activity" (Paulsen 2013). Work time has been portrayed as a national resource which, in extension, entails that the individual's work time has been formulated according to a near utilitarian calculation based in the maximization of the good of the many. In other words, it is not up to the individual to deal with work time, but rather, it becomes a national matter. This aligns well with the type of mutual dependency that Durkheim denoted as organic solidarity.

At this point, we can conclude that long work hours are rhetorically linked to good morals and taking both social and national responsibility. To work hard and long becomes, in this way, a positively charged, meaning-making activity.

The Construction and Demonization of the Lazy Bones

We return here to our starting point in the introductory ward manager's quote. She feared being viewed as not merely a cyber slacker but also lazy and unproductive. A person who surfs the Internet privately while subordinates and colleagues work diligently. If there is one thing that is not socially acceptable, it is to be unproductive while others toil. We need only light heartedly consider Jerome K. Jerome when he writes, in Three Men in a Boat: "I like work: it fascinates me. I can sit and look at it for hours" (Jerome 1998). Our perception of what is morally right forbids us to relate to this statement at face value and, thus, it becomes good comedy. Jerome can, however, help us to illuminate work norms (Jerome 1889:244).

A deviant behavior only becomes visible and meaningful in relation to the norm system that the behavior violates and, for example, Hacking (2000) argues that the norm violation also constitutes a part of an interactive process which contributes to the construction of the individual's image of self as well as of others (see also Becker 1997). The opposite of diligence, or its binary opposite, can be said to be laziness. Above, we discussed whether the culture of diligence in contemporary society has a manifest guideline for action inherent in its willingness and readiness to work hard and long hours. We also argued that norms and guidelines for action are continuously reproduced. One way to approach this reproduction might be to observe the opposite of normatively correct work: non-work and the non-worker. Within political rhetoric based in workfare, as several researchers have noted, unemployment is linked to passivity and welfare dependency (f. ex. Byrne 2005; Marks 1991; Martin 2004). The question is whether it is possible to see a parallel with regards to the length of work time or rather, in this case, the unwillingness to work long hours and whether work time reduction, in political and medial rhetoric, is equated with passivity, rest or idleness? If that is the case, the advocate for reduced work time should be equated to a passive lazy bones. Above, we established that work in contemporary society is a normative, morally inclusive concept, and, thus, the question is what lies beyond the norm, that which is not, what it is that is deviant from the expected behavior. Provided that work is the norm, the individual who does not work, the marginalized lazy bones, stands out from the crowd and becomes more visible.

One of these demons of human creation that has always pursued us is the Lazy Bones, the one who does not work and do what is right, who wastes God's, their own or a potential employer's time through their lack of productivity or carelessness (see, f. ex. Ottosson & Rosengren 2007). This is due to a lack of sufficient willingness to (wage-) work; they might even be suspected of being pathologically unwilling to work and thus deemed unable to occupy their unregulated time with meaningful content and, as a result, singled out as dubious and failed existences (Ottosson & Rosengren 2015).

We can determine that the image of the Lazy Bones has stalked us throughout history and has, in various circumstances, emerged in public debate (Paulsen 2013; Saint-Amand 2011). Depending on circumstance, various characters have been summoned. Alongside the warning example of the Lazy Bones, a threat looming in the near future unless we do something, we find other figures such as people on sick leave or unemployed, scrap metal thieves, hippies, bank robbers and prostitutes. As Byrne (2005), for example, demonstrates, an image has been depicted of a threatening subclass culture, a subclass culture that must be combated (see, f. ex. Mead 1989). This relates to upbringing, creating work incitements, but also to a cultural struggle that is articulated in military terms (cf. Fairclough 1992). Ronald Reagan, who was influenced by, for instance, Lawrence Mead, saw it as his social duty to resist as if waging war on those forces that would bring down society: "Only our deep moral values and strong institutions can hold back that jungle and restrain the darker impulses of human nature" (Ronald Reagan quoted in Marks, 1991, p. 450). Other, somewhat less dramatic metaphors than Reagan's war metaphors, are linked to negatively charged expressions. For example, work is usually linked both to physical and mental health, while the opposite, not to work, has been viewed as physically, mentally and morally debilitating. To work is denoted as something healthy and wholesome, while not to work is unhealthy (Paulsen 2013).

However, the connection between people's moral standards and their activity is not clear cut; rather, it depends on social factors such as class, gender, ethnicity and age. What is perceived as work and non-work respectively also varies over time. What work is or is not cannot be explained merely by its activity; rather, it is highly contingent to society and culture. That which is classed as idleness when conducted by a middle aged man is viewed as wholly acceptable when conducted by a child, for example. Actions that are seen as laziness when carried out by a worker have not only been seen as acceptable, but even natural and morally right when carried out by the nobility and the bourgeoisie. Workers and peasants have been placed in correction houses, while men and women from better circumstances have unperturbed indulged in horse riding or long walks. Both informal norms and formal legislation have made

distinctions based in social circumstances. It is clear that this culture of work and diligence is not egalitarian, but that it has distinguished and distinguishes between people.

If work is the morally right thing to do (at least for the working class), then willingness to work, as mentioned above, ought reasonably to be a very good way of expressing social belonging and inclusion. Since time is limited, this willingness needs to simultaneously correspond with a willingness to delimit and decrease life outside the workplace – rest, leave and leisure. An argument based in the will to delimit work time necessarily becomes a norm violation and deviant behavior. The question, then, is how the image of leisure relates to the norm and the guideline for action embedded in "long work days"? Do we also find the off-work individual in the neoliberal jungle?

During the entire history of industrialization, there has been a political will to delimit or reduce work time to the benefit of increased leisure and rest. Even if the motives have shifted from the rights perspective to one of maintaining the system, work time has generally been reduced during the 1900s. As a political rhetorical figure, for example, the triptych 888 was used as a symbol for the right to equal shares of work, leisure and sleep (Ottosson & Rosengren 2007). During the second half of the 1900s, not the least women's organizations, the environmental movement and an anti-capitalist youth movement formulated the six hour work day as a political demand (Ottosson & Rosengren 2015). Reduced work time was then linked to concepts such as tenacity, a lesser environmental burden and personal development (Ottosson & Rosengren 2015). Simultaneously, during the 1900s, counter images were brought forth (Ottosson & Rosengren 2007; 2013; Paulsen 2013). The counter argument to reduced work time was often waged through moral arguments – for example, it was argued that people fare ill from too much leisure; that workers may lapse into staring at the TV, intemperance and immorality. Arguments based in the wellbeing of the nation have also consistently been raised. Since demands for shorter work hours initially emerged towards the end of the 1800s, it has been maintained that the nation's work force would not suffice. If the needs during the early 1900s were military ones, towards its end, they had become healthcare, education and welfare needs. Non-work was thereby not only formulated as non-productivity but also as consumption at the expense of the needy (Ottosson & Rosengren 2007; 2013; Paulsen 2013).

Although work time reduction, in general, was a positively charged concept during the greater part of the 1900s, during the early 2000s it has been replaced by the concept of work strategy. Although this may seem a rather severe simplification, it could be said that work overtook the role of the positively charged concept from leisure. Rather than question how work time could be reduced, the starting point in political debate became how work time could be increased (Paulsen 2013). The concept of work strategy was linked ideologically, in the late 1900s, to workfare. Today, in line with this shift of perspective, debate on shorter work time is politically dead. We can state that there has been a rhetorical reversal and the question is, based in the arguments above, whether the "Lazy Bones" is a character that has thereby been deployed. Has whoever desires shorter work time been portrayed as an advocate of non-work, of non-productivity and, thus, of laziness? We argue that within a Swedish political context, this process can be linked to the Swedish Employers' Confederation's (SAF) political offensive of 1975 (Ottosson & Rosengren 2015). In a previous study, we demonstrate that SAF consistently uses rhetoric that places great value in work and that work has consistently been pitted against passivity. Reduced work time was clearly linked to inactivity and thereby became an attack on society's and the individual's wellbeing. The principal character in SAF's rhetoric is the Lazy Bones, he who will not work and do the right thing, he who wastes time. Within this rhetoric, the Lazy Bones is represented as a degenerate and immoral character who consumes leisure (Ottosson & Rosengren 2015).

Without in any way presuming to summarize the materials and conclusions of a generally broad scope, below we will present some examples from the Swedish election campaign in 2010. One component of this election campaign was the conservative and the liberal parties' counter arguments to one of the Green Party's (Miljöpartiet) standpoints – a general work time reduction. The conservative newspaper editorials depicted both graphically and textually an image of the Green Party leaders lying about in hammocks. The images, published repeatedly, share several common denominators which can all be traced to idleness.

In the hammock a person reclines restfully with a mobile phone or at best a book. The images link to traditional imagery of lazy and unproductive individuals idly stretched out on their kitchen sofa. This morally reprehensible imagery is often reinforced by the presence of someone else at work. To "lie on the kitchen sofa" is, perhaps, one of the most emphatic expressions of passivity and unwillingness to work in the Swedish language. A similar expression is, "to lie on the lazy side." Commonly, these images can be seen in popular culture, for example, in comic books, films and TV. Towards the end of the 1900s, perhaps tinged by Southern European influences, the Lazy Bones is portrayed with increasing frequency as lying in his hammock. The hammock and the kitchen sofa become, in other words, images or metaphors that are distinctly charged with a negative connotation of laziness.

During the Swedish election in 2010, advocates of shorter work hours ended up depicted in this mode of idleness. If the graphic image is one of a hammock, the linguistic equivalent is the Spanish word for midday rest, siesta. For instance, member of parliament Tomas Tobé of the Moderate Party wrote in an article entitled "Sweden can't afford siesta politics" in the Sydsvenska Dagbladet (14 May 2010). In an opinion piece in the Västervikstidningen, "The Green Party's Siesta Politics", the editor illustrates the article with an image of a man reclining in a hammock (Västervikstidningen 1 August 2010). Previously, the same image had been used by liberal Sydsvenska Dagbladet (26 May 2010) when illustrating an opinion piece by Ulf Holm of the Green Party. Alongside the article, the editor has inserted – you guessed it – a man lying in a hammock. Beneath the hammock, we see a deceptive caption, "Work Politics?" Whenever ideas and proposals of reduced work time were illustrated during the spring and summer of 2010, siestas and hammocks were commonly employed as rhetorical devices. One further example of unhealthy hammock slouching is to be found in the liberal newspaper Expressen (31 March 2010) beneath the caption "The Lazy Bones" in which Green Party leader Maria Wetterstrand is portrayed. In this article, Expressen's editorial writer vigorously attacks the Green Party's politics within the sphere of working life. The text is illustrated with a photomontage in which Maria Wetterstrand has been framed in a passive and work-free condition. Naturally, she reclines in a hammock. She would appear to be quite content. Smiling, she lies back, reading what we can only assume is an enjoyable book. In these newspaper articles, the concept of reduced work time is clearly linked to negatively charged metaphors such as "lying on your back", "hammock" and "siesta." Both text and images interact and this combination expresses that which cannot be written (cf. Ottosson & Rosengren 2013). The reader and observer is allowed to come to their own conclusion that Holm and Wetterstrand indeed are genuine Lazy Bones. Irrespective of whether the illustrative images have been purposely selected to reinforce a political message or not, the connection has been made and remains with the reader. The hammock-lounging Lazy Bones becomes a representative of that which is sick and parasitical in society.

By being placed in hammocks, both Green Party politicians Maria Wetterstrand and Ulf Holm become disloyal consumers of a commonly produced prosperity. Consuming resources while lying in a hammock is a serious offence, since it entails shirking from your social responsibility. The individual who is willing to work hard is a good and admirable person, while the person who would work less becomes a disloyal social parasite. With his talk of shorter work hours, the hammock-lounger breaks down our morals. The Lazy Bones eats his way into the fruits and consumes them from within. Reduced work time becomes thereby equated to increased inactivity and, similarly to the events in Reagan's jungle, a moral attack on the wellbeing of society.

Beyond the limits of work, we find not only non-work, but also laziness, mental ill-health, and vice. The conceptual polar pair of "nourishment - debilitation" coincides with "healthy – unhealthy." The work norm entails that the division between work and non-work not only becomes a question of individual livelihood and lifestyle opportunities but also that the division becomes a moral division. Therefore, in line with this, the advocate for reduced work time also becomes an advocate for increased depravity. Based in the same norm system, the ward manager experiences frustration at the fact that the staff doubt her work input. Since work at the computer is not considered real labor in this department, she too crosses the same normative line.

Conclusion

This article is primarily theoretical and the presented empirical data are limited. From a theoretical methodological standpoint, the article takes its starting point in a discourse analytical perspective in which we have studied how concepts are defined and given meaning by being equated with metaphors and images that clearly are normatively charged. In this article, we have attempted to link the individual's experience at her workplace with social and labor market policy.

The article is based in an individual's experience of not fulfilling expectations and, instead, is suspected of being a lazy and unproductive worker. It seems reasonable to assume that her suspicion is due to the fact that her work at the computer is not considered "real work." To understand this situation, we argue that it is necessary to observe the normative content of work. Certain activities in specific situations tend to be judged as work, while other activities tend to be judged as the polar opposite of work: non-work. This non-work and those who conduct it, the Lazy Bones, are perhaps most easily located within the rhetorical language employed by advocates for increased workfare elements in the welfare system, such as in social and labor market policy. We argue that the individual experience of

insufficiency and the viewpoint that the unemployed are unwilling to work (and are therefore lazy) are based in the same norm system.

Norms constitute the key theoretical concepts in this article. We argue that norms are (a) guidelines for action (imperatives) which express a normative (ought) dimension; they are (b) socially reproducible and reproduced and finally, (c) they constitute the individual's perception of the social expectations of their behavior. Central to this is also the fact that norms regulate our work performance and are based in a power structure in which various actors seek the privilege to determine the validity of norms as well as their interpretation. Norms are constituted by human interaction, but are simultaneously a precondition for any form of interaction. In relation to norms, belonging is seen as expressed – through various acts and symbols. Thus, working hours become a means to construct belonging and identity. If a voluntarily long workday symbolizes devotion to, responsibility for and fulfilment of one's duty towards the organization, then working time becomes a marker of personal identity. The individual describes him- or herself as desirable through fulfilment of the norms and expectations he or she identifies as embedded in society.

This article leads towards a discussion on how the debate on reduced work time was conducted in the Swedish election in 2010. The newspaper materials we have presented clearly demonstrate that the image of the advocate for reduced work time is placed in a context that is similar to the depiction of the "non-worker", which is prevalent both in neoliberal workfare arguments as well as individual workplaces. We argue that the glue that binds the department manager's frustration, the rhetoric surrounding the welfare state, the willingness to work long hours and the rhetoric surrounding shorter work hours, consists in the norm system which regulates work at a societal level.

In this article, we have argued from the standpoint that this same norm system that makes the unemployed feel useless also creates positive value in working late nights. Our contribution, therefore, is (1) that we have highlighted the significance of work norms within the evolution towards a borderless working life; (2) that we have demonstrated that the norms that govern and regulate work are constructed at various levels of society: and finally (3) we have demonstrated how norms can be communicated and reproduced by linking concepts to positively or negatively charged concepts.

We argue that a key (meaning making) character in the construction of this norm system in various contexts is summoned forth in the demon of the "Lazy Bones." Having breathed life into this warning example, it now wanders the offices, beaches and cafes, reminding us of the elevated value of work. It follows, then, that we would prefer to keep the "Lazy Bones" at arm's length and by working long hours, depict ourselves to others as good citizens.

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Deletion Practices in the Era of Permanent Digital Memory

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There are a lot of blind spots in historical knowledge. There are countless styles and methods for trying to retain important information about the past. Libraries, books, films, recordings, stories, songs, archives, databases, and hard drives all contain kernels of information and data. However, there will always be events, moments, reactions, and countless other aspects of human experience that will not be recorded. Legal scholar Viktor Mayer-Schönberger reassures us that this "failure" of humanity to capture every piece of information is perfectly "natural", as it mirrors the natural patterns of human physiology: "As our nerve cells process the incoming information, from simple stimuli to pattern recognition, a tremendous amount of information is deliberately lost. It is the first layer of unconscious biological forgetting-and one we rarely realize." (2009: 17) While humans, generally speaking, are not biologically and physiologically constructed to have perfect memory, the impulse to exteriorize information as external resources is a timeless practice, most notably through the creation of language and writing. Through digital technology, the practice of capturing information, and converting information into a storable and recallable resource, has changed drastically.

Many political theorists and cultural studies scholars have attempted to re-theorize the social and political significance of memory in light of the permanence of digital data and the permanent recall of the internet. Undoubtedly, individuals and collectives have coped with these developments by adopting new technological and social habits in order to navigate the world of information. New modes of remembering and forgetting have emerged. Much research has already been devoted to the role of memory in the digital age. Likewise, much scholarship has been devoted to exploring the relationships between permanent memory, privacy, individual rights, freedom of expression and autonomy in the digital age. This article, instead, aims to explore a new emerging trend in digital data management: deleting. New products, programs, laws and habits have been developed that aim to permanently delete data as a form of data security. Rather than focusing on enhanced encryption or secured storage of information, these programs have adopted deletion as a viable technological habit in the social navigation of information. Both data collectors and individuals are exploring the option of erasure as a means to control the role information plays in the era of big data. I argue that these new deletion practices, and new interactions with the digital environment, must be understood as processes which influence the formation of individual and collective consciousness, rather than solely an issue of privacy.

In this article, I aim to explore the issue of deleting data (primarily from the user-initiated side, as opposed to the data collector side) and ask what social and technical consequences may come about as the result of conscious decisions to delete. The empirical observations and examples primarily deal with the individual effort to manage information about oneself (personal details, personal history) in the world of shared information and deep archives. But, I'd also like to suggest that my analysis, drawing on Wolfgang Ernst's media archeology and Bernard Stiegler's philosophy of technology, will illuminate possible consequences for the digital architecture of daily life if widespread deletion becomes a favored mode of data management. First, I address the conditions of archives and data storage, focusing on the technical and economic conditions of archivization which make big data not only possible, but a preferred method of social and market analysis by corporate and government entities. Second, I describe deletion as a practice and detail some of the considerations that one must take before choosing to delete or retain. Deletion practices are often marked by technical, legal and social considerations, and I reference several high profile court cases

involving Snapchat and Google to highlight these considerations. After I introduce these two core sections, I then take a brief moment to discuss the constitutive role played by technical supplements as theorized by Bernard Stiegler. This section is crucial as I detail my methodological approach to deletion practices through a phenomenological, transductive understanding of archives, technics and populations. I conclude with a section that speculates on the consequences of data deletion (or retention) based on Steigler's account of tertiary memory. Here I suggest that missing, incomplete or purposely deleted data will prompt predictable reactions from the data collector side of big data analysis. I also suggest that the process of human-technical co-evolution will be greatly affected by a social embrace of deletion tactics.

The Conditions of Archivization

In order to explore the constitutive role that digital data archives play in society, we must begin with the assumption that the "process" of archivization is determined by the technical and organizational conditions of archives. "As noted by both Derrida in Archive Fever, and Foucault in The Archaeology of Knowledge, the archive is always also a question of the processes and technologies of archivization, the dictums governing what enters the archive, how it enters the archive, how the archive is structured, how it is ordered. For Foucault, the archive is better expressed as the logic of archivization." (Cooke 2009) The logic of archivization is simultaneously the set of rules which will ultimately govern what can be stored and what can be discarded. The process of deletion is part of the logic of archivization. Obviously, big data is a collection of digital practices working in conjunction with today's logic of archivization. Therefore, it is necessary to look at two sets of factors that have led to the emergence of big data. First, one must look at the economic and market driven changes to data storage technology, digitization, and access to stored information. Second, one must also attempt to understand the functionality, organization and dynamic nature of information architecture, specifically the mathematics and algorithms that govern data combinations. To explore the first set of circumstances, I turn to Viktor Mayer-Schönberger's 2009 book Delete: The Virtue of Forgetting in the Digital Age. In this project, he explores the evolution of data storage, the emergence of digitization and the evolution of consumer habits. He does so in a way that identifies the associated "costs" of remembering and forgetting and ultimately concludes that the cost of opting for permanent data retention is far too low and the cost of "forgetting" is far too high for any reasonable alternative to "permanent memory" to thrive. To explore the second set of circumstances, I offer my own interpretation of Wolfgang Ernst's "media archeology" approach to the study of media objects. His work is the flag bearer for a new "Berlin" school of media archeology that differs entirely from Anglo-American approaches to media studies. He is less concerned with the content of media representations and the interpretive engagement with media images, and far more concerned about the actual hardware and software that record media. By focusing on the technical artifacts themselves, I argue that Ernst treats the structure of data storage and the algorithms that maintain that structure as active components in the individuation processes of human-technical co-evolution.

In technology sectors, the idea of perfect memory, permanent storage, infinite depth of archives and lightning-fast retrieval is the standard towards which manufacturers now strive. Additionally, many note that the information accessible to everyone through the internet is an important civic tool to help educate the masses and provide as much transparency as possible. Generally speaking, there are a lot of easily identified benefits to a digital culture that defaults into memory/storage. It is not difficult to understand why consumers and manufacturers have attempted to overcome the deficiencies of human memory through digital technology. Even Viktor Mayer-Schönberger, a strong advocate of resuscitating forgetting as a social practice, notes that perfect memory has a number of benefits which are practical. For instance, perfect memory allows individuals to note ideas, capture moments for personal recall, create manuals and procedural guides, avoid previous mistakes and present some level of accountability so that errors are recorded rather than hidden. (Mayer-Schönberger 2009: 10) Indeed, there are countless more reasons why individuals, groups, corporations or governments might aim for perfect memory, more information and easier access.

However, perfect memory certainly has its drawbacks. There are plenty of counter arguments against big data and the now dominant role digital archives play in many aspects of social life. There are a number of perfectly reasonable arguments for why the ability to forget, to move on unhindered by the past, would be a positive to not only individuals, but to collectives as well. On a very practical, individual level, Mayer-Schönberger points out that the inability or unwillingness to forget may lead to the condition in which the future has a chilling effect on the

present, as we are overly cautious or indecisive in choices and behaviors for fear that they will be permanently stored online. (2009: 10) Despite this trepidation, Mayer-Schönberger argues there has always been a social impulse to move beyond the short comings of biological memory and to create social supplements of memory storage. He argues that the creation of language, and then writing, are both evolutionary steps in the battle for perfect memory and that digitization has pushed the social default permanently away from forgetting toward remembering. The evolution of technologies supporting external memory storage, above and beyond the capabilities of biological memory, has further pushed society toward the default condition of total recall.

But, when studying the effects of data storage and retrievable access on social and political issues, one cannot start from the assumption that perfect memory and eternal storage are default social conditions. The social exteriorization of memory has evolved over time, culminating in our current digital age. According to Mayer-Schönberger, the four elements of the "digital age" that have reduced the capacity of forgetting are: digitization, cheap storage, easy retrieval, global reach. (2009) It is necessary to point out that big data is not the default condition of the world's data storage systems. Rather, it is the logical result and logical extension of new technologies that have emerged into the consumer market place. Just as language and writing were not solely generated as a form of memory extension, they are nevertheless technical creations that exteriorize human memory into the external world. For instance, "it's worth noting that the revolution is being propelled by the convergence of three technology domains: staggeringly powerful but cheap information engines (computing at scale), ubiquitous wireless broadband, and smart sensors. This kind of technology-infrastructure convergence is the hallmark of revolutions. Nearly a century ago, for instance, air travel was enabled by the convergent maturation of powerful propulsion engines, modern aluminum metallurgy, and the emerging petroleum industry." (Mills 2013) Just as the petroleum industry did not develop expressly in anticipation of air flight, the technologies of information engines, wireless broadband and smart sensors all have multiple intentional design traits, one of which is big data collection and processing. Following the Social Construction of Technology school of thought, one could argue that these technologies have put in place the necessary computing power to foster a system of big data, but the actual social organization of data collection and analysis has been crafted by social, governmental and corporate interests. (Pinch and Bijker 2003) It is through the social appropriation of such available technologies that these technologies form the digital architecture of daily life, positioned strategically in such a way that humans (in the form of consumers, patrons, customers, spectators, patients or employees) must interact with them if they wish to participate fully in society. Of course, given the role that such data analysis plays in many industries, we must note that a never-ending supply of fresh, new data (new consumer data points) must come into existence to justify the usefulness of big data enterprises. These data collections technologies do not grow, expand or evolve without a constant stream of human-supplied information. Therefore, the data collection points of big data must be unobtrusive and user-friendly.

Mayer-Schönberger's 2009 book did a good job of historically analyzing the material and economic roots of advanced post-industrial information economies which require digital memory. His conclusion is that "The truth is that the economics of storage have made forgetting brutally expensive." (Mayer-Schönberger 2009: 68) For instance, he points out that analog systems of data storage need to conquer geography, by shipping physical objects from one user to the next. But since digital information is standardized, any digital information can be shared on the same digital network (internet) without the costs or time-delay of dealing with analog objects. Similar to how digital markets far outperform analog markets on the costs of "sharing" information, Mayer-Schönberger also points out that production costs also favor digitization. "Unlike the production of most physical goods- think of shoes or a wooden chair- almost the entire cost of information goods is spent on the production of the first piece, while the making of subsequent copies incurs a relatively negligible cost…This pushes collectors of information to have their information treasures accessed by many others." (2009: 82) Not only does the cost of "re-production" favor the ease and practicality of digitization, but he argues that the cost of this process also produces an incentive to share information and to increase connectivity.

Though the production side and distribution networks of digital data storage have far fewer costs than equivalent analog systems, Mayer-Schönberger suggests that individual consumers also approach these technologies with costs and benefits in mind. He noticed an interesting consumer trend that people seem to prefer higher capacity storage devices, even if cheaper lower capacity devices are available. For the most part, the market accommodates this desire for higher storage capacity. He notes that the costs of personal data storage devices have stayed the same over time, but storage space has increased, as opposed to static storage capacity at declining cost. This is Mayer-Schönberger's argument for markets, manufacturers and individual consumers drifting toward remembering as the "default condition." The costs of remembering continue to decline. Even the time costs of deciding whether to

save or delete are too high not to default into remembering. The effort to "save" has diminished, but the value of remembering has soared.

To summarize, Mayer-Schönberger argues that these economic and technical factors are the driving force behind the information economy, rather than a consequence. However, I argue that if we are to explore deletion as a tool of social navigation of data archives in the context of big data, we cannot explain things simply in the vocabulary of "costs," "privacy" or "autonomy." I argue it is essential to understand more fully how data archives (inter)act with populations to constitute humanity, in a time when information circulation and information analysis occur with no temporal or geographic constraints. I will explore this constitutive role of memory storage in the next section. But, first, I turn to Wolfgang Ernst's study of archives and digital memory in an effort to better explain the dynamic power of archives and information as social forces. "Data" are not static objects waiting to be retrieved and utilized by social actors. Given how archives operate, I argue that archives and data themselves operate as social actors. Ernst's attention to the hardware, software and programming of archives help illuminate this point.

Picking up from Mayer-Schönberger's analysis of how digital data archives became so prevalent, Wolfgang Ernst argues that "Once digitized, the electronic sound or image is open to real-time access and new search options such as similarity-based image retrieval. The traditional architecture of the archive has been based on classifying records by inventories; this is now being supplemented or even replaced by order in variation and fluctuation, that is, dynamic access. This 'archive' is no longer simply a passive storage space but becomes generative itself in algorithmically ruled processuality." (2012: 29) Ernst is implicitly stating that the modes of access and modes of data retrieval in digital archives have changed so drastically from traditional archives that our entire understanding of "information" needs to be updated. In the digital archive, there is no such thing as static information. It is constantly in flux. Through the algorithmic modes of data management, data is permanently recombined and recontextualized, constantly forming "new" data points, presented in new forms and new temporalities. The archive itself, through the rules that govern its ordering, comes to generate data for the social world. "Algorithmic objects are objects that come into being anew and processually; they do not exist as fixed data blocks." (Ernst 2012: 82)

Indeed, the conditions that make digital archives possible also guarantee that that which is archived will differ from earlier modes of information storage. "The testimonial function of archival records was once firmly rooted in their material authenticity." (Ernst 2012: 88) This is no longer the case, as material authenticity is foreign to the immaterial nature of numeracy and algorithm-based logic of materiality as code. In stark contrast to physical buildings, or library cataloging systems, in which recorded pieces of information were saved and preserved to maintain the fidelity of the information, the primary purpose of the archive is to retrieve information in ways that are combinable, transferrable and accessible by algorithmic calculations. As such, "addresses for such (non-)places of memory are less spatial and more defined by their temporal modulations." (Parikka 2011: 58) This is what Ernst means when he claims that archives operate in contrast to the historically linear progression of time. He argues that the primary characteristic of the digital archive is the vectorial and orthoganol aspects of information recall which only operate in "microtemporality" compatible with the digital processing power of archives, and it factors into the phenomenological experience of the macrotemporality of the social, historical world. "The microtemporality of the data processing operations (synchronization) is thus superimposed on the historical archive's macrotime." (Ernst 2012: 85) And, the very nature of this shift in archives is ontological. "In short, it is the calculation-and number-logic-based ontology of technical (and especially computational) media through which cultural memory gets articulated instead of the literary-based narrativization favoured ontologically and epistemologically by historians through which to think media archeology…The issue of 'digital memory' is then less a matter of representation than of how to think through the algorithmic counting ontology of a memory." (Parikka, 2011, p. 57)

Lastly, I would like to focus on the transition from the algorithmically generated to the algorithmically degenerated. Ernst touches on something critically important to the study of information navigation. If we understand digital archives as partially defined by permanent flux, transfer and reorganization, this helps us understand Ernst's claim that data points do not exist outside of the algorithm. However, if algorithmic objects are objects that come into being anew and processually, then they are tied to the temporal necessity of the algorithm itself. This "dynamic access" of archives is one of appearance and disappearance depending on the selected search methodology. When an algorithmic object is not being generated, it does not exist, a glaring difference to the book that remains dusty on the shelf when not being accessed. Ernst declares that archives demonstrate the "potential complicity of cultural memory media in the symbolic exchange of presence and disappearance. Digital storage media are potentially involved in the erasure of data." (2012: 93) He also declares "Characteristic of digital archives is the fact that they can be instantaneously erased-faster than by any fire in the library at Alexandria." (Ernst 2012: 93) Indeed, I suspect

Viktor Mayer-Schönberger would agree that a crucial feature of digital data storage, and a reason for its popularity, is the ability to quickly delete, replace, rewrite or copy over the used space of memory. It is somewhat ironic that the "dynamic access" to information and memory is only made possible by the algorithms that govern the archives, and yet the very nature of these calculations is that that they must simultaneously delete, update and reorganization information, constantly nullifying the preceding calculation. It is in this odd dichotomy of constant appearance and disappearance that we can most clearly articulate Ernst's claim that the digital archive and the physical archive operate on distinctly different temporal planes.

Deletion as a Practice

In a recent book about bureaucracy and the historical role played by paperwork in the management and subjugation of society, Ben Kafka mentions certain moments of political resistance that have been carried out in, through or against paperwork. In one particularly powerful tale, Kafka discusses the exploits of Charles-Hippolyte Labussière, who hid and destroyed documents while working for the Committee of Public Safety Prisoner's Bureau in 1794 to save accused citizens from the guillotine. (2012) I reference this example to highlight two points about the politics of archives. First, it demonstrates that bureaucratic information storage, the precursor of today's massive digital archives run by governments or corporate entities, holds a certain power within institutionalized processes, such as the justice system. The power of memory and of information is intertwined with the social, economic and legal power structures of society. Secondly, this tale highlights how loss, deletion or rendering irretrievable of data can be conceived not only as an error in memory but as an action of political resistance or symbolism. The act of deleting information can be seen as political in a number of ways depending on the context of the deletion. It can be seen as an exercise of power through an autonomous act to control/delete information about oneself. It can also be seen as an exercise of power relative to an external other than has an interest in maintaining and recalculating data. Deleting can also be an example of systemic power networks operating in ways that enhance or solidify the circuitry of power flows, such as forcing people to "refresh" information about oneself.

In some situations, the decision to erase can be complicated and worthy of much conscious attention from an individual user, while at other times a decision or conscious user-initiated action isn't necessary at all and the act of deletion is carried out by data collectors with no input or awareness from the individual tied to the data in question. The point is that deletion of information in today's context, the emerging era of big data, is something that entails issues of power, privacy, autonomy and memory. In addition to the political and social ramifications of opting to delete or save, one must also be aware that the practical possibility of deleting data from archives can involve complicated interactions from technical and legal obstacles. For instance, the recent surge in popularity for such apps as Snapchat (apps that leave "no trace" of communications) could be interpreted as perhaps an increase in awareness of data surveillance, or a social psychological shift towards embracing the temporary and ephemeral over the permanent. However, the promise of "no trace" cannot necessarily be achieved as simply as using an app like Snapchat. There are countless technical and legal issues surrounding how an app "deletes" data, as well as what other data it may record tangentially to the process of deletion. For instance, in 2014, Snapchat settled a dispute with the Federal Trade Commission over how they misrepresented the way that content "disappears." "The FTC found that while Snapchat was marketing their photo app as a truly ephemeral product, they were tracking user data such as location, contacts, and phone numbers, therefore misrepresenting their privacy and security settings." (Mosendz 2014) Using Snapchat can generate new data trails, despite the fact that many users turn to such apps precisely as a way to avoid leaving digital traces.

In another high profile case, the European Union Court of Justice ruled that search engine Google must comply with individual's requests to remove personal information from its search results. The enforcement of the so-called "Right to be Forgotten" gives individual "data subjects" enhanced rights in seeking to limit details about themselves online. Judges from the European Union Court of Justice declared that "If it is found, following a request by the data subject, that the inclusion of those links in the list is, at this point in time, incompatible with the directive, the links and information in the list of results must be erased…" (http://www.nbcnews.com/tech/security/europes-top-court-backs-right-be-forgotten-google-case-n104486, May 27, 2014.) Though this appears as a valuable new resource for those who wish to embrace deletion practices as a form of social data navigation, this ruling is fraught with technical and legal complications. For instance, Google needs to develop the appropriate technical pathways

for people to make such requests, which can be a complicated endeavor. Also, Google needs to establish procedures for exactly how they will determine which requests should be honored and which requests do not meet the legal threshold to qualify as that which can be "forgotten." Moreover, "Because the court's ruling applies only within Europe, it will mean some fragmentation of search results. That is, Europeans and Americans will see slightly different versions of the Internet." (http://www.nbcnews.com/tech/internet/google-right-be-forgotten-ruling-unlikely-repeat-u-s-n114731, May 27, 2014) While social attitudes in Europe have pushed to establish this daring new deletion practice, many legal scholars argue that the inherent conflict between the right to be forgotten and the right to freedom of expression may overshadow the intended social outcome of this law. "This could transform Google, for example, into a censor-in-chief for the European Union, rather than a neutral platform. And because this is a role Google won't want to play, it may instead produce blank pages whenever a European user types in the name of someone who has objected to a nasty blog post or status update." (Rosen 2012: 92) In such cases, a wholesale embrace of deletion practices as reinforced by the European Union Court of Justice may lead to censoring other valuable information.

There is no shortage of other examples of the ways in which deletion practices can overlap with technical, legal and social norms. However, there is a shortage of theoretical and philosophical discussion about the ways deletion practices may alter how individuals and groups relate to data collectors and archives in the future if deletion practices become widespread. I suggest approaching deletion as a social practice that people may choose to employ in an effort to navigate big data, to structure the information architecture of their digital lives, and to manage their identity as a construct of data assemblages. In this context, issues of power, privacy, autonomy and memory all come into play, but we can also focus on the everydayness and habitual aspects of deletion as social navigation of information.

People engage in mutually beneficial relationships with data technologies. On the one hand, such voluntary interaction is the simplest way to engage in all the opportunities of modern consumerist society. On the other hand, the price that such convenience entails is that the information history one creates will be used to influence governing techniques and to target individual consumers in the future. Methodologically, this give and take relationship reminds one of the transductive, phenomenological approach to technology studies, detailed in the writings of philosopher Bernard Stiegler. When people are interacting with data storage, or being acted upon by the social application of stored data, the process of individuation is playing out as both human and technical supplements inform and contour each other. This co-evolution, the process of individuation, is critical to understanding how conscious and deliberate interactions with data or the process of data collection is not simply an isolated behavior, or a temporally limited interaction, but rather an exteriorized impulse being discretely recorded and incorporated into the digital architecture of our daily lives.

Therefore, if remembering is now the default condition of society, and if the form remembering is taking is digital data storage due to a confluence of technical products and technological lifestyle habits, then it stands to reason that people will (consciously or subconsciously) amend their daily habits and expectations in such a way that is compatible with perfect memory. They learn to live under default conditions. The latter chapters of Viktor Mayer-Schönberger's book Delete: The Virtue of Forgetting in the Digital Age address several possible approaches a society could take to live with copious amounts of data. He presents a number of possibilities, but then proceeds to poke holes in each argument by pointing out legal, technological, biological or practical reasons why such approaches are not likely to help us come to grips with the default condition of remembering. His possible solutions are digital abstinence, enhanced privacy rights, digital privacy rights infrastructure, cognitive adjustment, information ecology evolution, the social ability to master contextualization of information or deletion of data by setting mutually agreed to expiration dates. (Mayer-Schönberger 2009)

Mayer-Schönberger strongly supports a technological and social solution to the perils of permanent memory by arguing that expiration dates on data will reintroduce forgetting as a valuable social condition. Specifically, he argues that expiration dates should be user-initiated because it will "humanize" the process by mimicking or closely approximating the natural processes of psychological and biological forgetting. Mayer-Schönberger talks about ways that expiration dates could be tweaked so that expiration more closely resembles the decay of human memory. He suggests that as we learn more about memory, neuroscience can invent digital code that can emulate memory decay. He advocates for temporal cues (like reinforcing information that is frequently recalled, or providing visual reminders as information approaches its expiration date) as ways of mimicking real life situations where reminders inhabit our geographic locations. He believes this is the next big step in improving web browsing and consumer experience (Mayer-Schönberger 2009: 193) In addition to his goal of rehumanizing the process and restoring the social significance of forgetting, he also makes some normative prescriptions against permanent memory. He

believes "The value of information is not timeless" and "good information is preferable to copious information." (Mayer-Schönberger 2009: 173) He also argues that forgetting aids in the process of abstraction and that abstracted knowledge is necessary to expeditiously and decisively operate in our daily lives. He argues that "Using generalizations, relying on conjecture, emphasizing the present, and respecting subsequent experiences, helps us to reason swiftly and economically, to abstract and generalize, and to act in time, rather than to remain caught up in conflicting recollections." (Mayer-Schönberger 2009: 21)

Ironically, Mayer-Schönberger admits that programs facilitating expiration dates cannot be characterized as only subtracting information from existing data sources. Rather, expiration dates are an "addition" to information, actually existing as a new piece of meta-information. When we set a piece of data up to expire, we add a tag of information to the original data point. This observation is crucial to my exploration of the social navigation of information through deletion. Mayer-Schönberger's observation that deleting data simultaneously adds something to the infosphere highlights that data and archives are not simply "dead" or "static" collections of information, but very much alive and fluid (though he may not necessarily agree with this statement, his observations reveal the dynamic nature of the digital archive.) Therefore, accessing information with the intent to delete it is still an action that can be recorded or added to the information infrastructure. Even in deletion you may leave a digital trail. While this process would add to the technical web of information, Mayer-Schönberger believes it should also be user controlled which would eventually humanize the process of data collection by incorporating conscious choice as well as unconscious forgetting. Because the process of user-initiated expiration dates would simultaneously add and subtract our preferential choices to big data webs of information, it would be crucial to "entice" users to explore such options by creating simple user interfaces to which people could acclimate quickly.

Mayer-Schönberger identifies a number of potential difficulties which would likely accompany the widespread implementation of expiration dates on information. While this is his preferred socio-technical solution to overly burdensome archival memory, he is realistic in his tempered enthusiasm and he understands that it will take not only a monumental shift in social behavior but also a number of technological innovations as well as a number of legal compromises from all parties involved. But, beyond his prudent approach to expiration dates, he argues that "clicking delete is not enough." First of all, he claims that once we have "shared" our information, we have lost control of it. In essence, he is arguing that sharing information is a mutual enterprise that entitles both the sender and the recipient to claims over that information, though not necessarily equal claims. Many reliable and transparent legal protections must be in place to guarantee that the sharing of information remains a finite relation. However, he understands that someone wishing to delete information (about themselves or otherwise) will likely require the cooperation of many other parties. For this reason, clicking delete is not enough and this is why Mayer-Schönberger identifies both mutually binding social agreements and technical solutions to the problem. Similarly, Mayer-Schönberger realizes that sharing of information is not a finite operation with a clear start and end. The act of sharing information, or any digital act, creates a trail of "other" information (time and date stamp, related searches, etc…) The original data input may have expired, but a string of other information has automatically been created. In other words, data is de- and re-contextualized at various times in its data lifespan. (Mayer-Schönberger 2009: 86-88) Deleting one piece of information does not guarantee that all information relating to the initial information exchange will be deleted. In fact, the original sender of information may not have any claims over the new information that comes into existence surrounding the original data.

I'd like to flush out "deletion" as a social practice by highlighting a specific example of opting to delete over opting to retain. Just as the Snapchat and Google examples above pointed out that there are countless technical and legal considerations that must be taken into account when choosing to delete, the following example highlights the complex social and contractual obligations of deleting digital data, even when all parties involved are amenable to data deletion as an alternative to securing data. Recently, a secured person to person communications company specializing in encryption and data security between clients introduced a new subscription feature for mobile phone users which allows people to protect their text messages by automatically deleting them after a preset amount of time has passed. This example brings a number of issues to the forefront. In this specific case, there is a clear concern and motivation for privacy. Additionally, the act of deletion requires participation from three separate parties (sender, recipient, communications company) and highlights the interconnectedness of floating data points. This example also highlights the technological and market driven aspects of data management because this particular act of deletion requires a subscription to a specific product.

This secure messaging app allows customers to send private, encrypted messages which the sender can program to auto-delete. The app deletes sent messages and attachments from senders' and receivers' devices. The app works

very similarly to the idea of expiration dates put forth by Mayer-Schönberger (though he argues that such apps should be implemented in all technical settings that request personal information from the product user.) Using this texting app, the user can set texts, videos, voice recordings or pictures to automatically delete at a pre-specified time after delivery, or recall and destroy any previously sent message at the user's discretion. Additionally, this company's texting application generates a new encryption key for each new message. The key is then destroyed so even if the device is examined, there are no keys to be found.

If we examine this application of "auto-deletion" in the context of Mayer-Schönberger's calls for expiration dates and the "rehumanization" of forgetting, we can see that, though this is but a single example, the prospects of deleting may be on the horizon. But, we should note that the people who sign-up for the services of this secured communications firm are already very concerned about privacy and data protection. The actions taken by these specific subscribers are not necessarily "coping mechanisms" to living in a world of big data, but rather meticulously planned actions. This highlights Mayer-Schönberger's concern that any systems put in place for users to opt for expiration dates must be very user-friendly, or the user will have to be very motivated. The second issue of Mayer-Schönberger's thesis that this example brings to light is that three distinct parties must be involved if this deletion is going to be successful. The sender of information must be heedful enough to set the auto-delete timer. The recipient must also be consciously involved by being a subscriber to the same secured communications company. This service only works if the recipient is also a willing participant. Otherwise, deleting information that is stored in another person's phone is clearly way out of bounds and an invasion of their privacy. The company is the third party involved, as it supplies the technical mechanisms and must also provide assurances that the messages will not remain on either device, nor show any trace of its transit. This perfectly demonstrates that "clicking delete is not enough" and it must be a mutually agreed upon social action with multiple parties agreeing to deletion. The relevant connection to Mayer-Schönberger's expiration dates proposal is that this text destroying application will only succeed if there is a receptive marketplace. Mayer-Schönberger has demonstrated that the costs associated with data storage are relatively low and the costs of deletion can be relatively high. In this case, the cost seems very high because this is a subscription service and is only available to paying customers. Obviously, this example only reinforces the ideas of Mayer-Schönberger by setting an actual, premium price on security and the power to delete. It is obviously a technically demanding task that requires much cooperation from clients and companies, and it may seem relatively expensive compared to allowing one's personal data be collected and stored.

This example of deleting texts from two user's devices as well as the data company's internal storage system highlights all the concerns that Mayer-Schönberger identifies about the increasingly comfortable default position of "permanent memory." Deletion is a time intensive and expensive task, relative to default forgetting. This brings me to the final point about this example of auto-deletion, referring back to Mayer-Schönberger's point that deletion simultaneously creates a data trail. On the one hand, in the technical, digital sense, setting something to delete with expiration dates adds a new piece of information to the original data (the expiration date is added.) Other records likely indicate that an erasure or sweep took place at a specific time. Though the content in question may have been deleted, the digital footprint was likely expanded by this action. On the other hand, I would also add that something else has been created, or more specifically, exteriorized. According to philosopher Bernard Stiegler, each individual is constantly living in and through external supplements to daily life. But, instead of drawing firm ontological lines between subject and object, he argues that interiority is nothing more than its exteriorization. By this he means that individuals inscribe themselves into the world around them through their actions, their thoughts and their impulses. Virtually every action or act of creation is an externalization of memory. This "inscription" is actually materialized memory, and the technics and objects around us are externalized memory that constantly bring the past into the present and weigh on how individuals constitute consciousness at every moment. The question is: what exactly is someone exteriorizing into external memory when they seek to delete, hide or erase data?

Individuation and Memory

> "With the exteriorisation of memory comes a loss of memory and of knowledge, which is experienced today in our daily lives, in all the aspects of our existences, and, more and more often, in the feeling of our powerlessness, if not of our impotence - at the exact moment when the extraordinary mnesic power of digital networks make us all the more sensible to the immensity of human memory, which seems to have become infinitely reactivatable and accessible. This seeming paradox means that the question of hypomnesis is a political question, and the stakes of a combat: a combat for a politics of memory, and more

> precisely, for the constitution of sustainable hypomnesic milieux." (Stiegler http://www.arsindustrialis.org/anamnesisand-hypomnesis, February 20, 2010)

Like Wolfgang Ernst, I argue that the internal relations governing data storage and technical capabilities are a dynamic series of shifting calculations and algorithms which affects subtle change in the lives of individuals who are impacted by data surveillance (essentially everyone in post-industrial society.) And, because I am addressing the act of deletion as a conscious choice, or a conscious input and extraction into the algorithmic assemblages of digital life, I believe a phenomenological approach to the problem of memory in the digital age could be helpful. The phenomenology of Bernard Stiegler is my starting point. Stiegler's work on how time is constructed in a socially accessible way starts from the foundational assumption that humans and technology concomitantly co-constitute each other. This is critical to my arguments because I am trying to gauge the importance and impact of a conscious human choice on the technical architecture of daily life.

Stiegler argues that the relationship between the human experience of time and technical systems is based on an originary human-technic relationship, or the constitution all temporal experience through the technical. Stiegler claims that this originary duality is the possibility of collective and technological evolution, through which the external technical milieu inscribes in the human the possibility to constitute its consciousness in the present and over time. Stiegler's philosophical analysis in Technics and Time (Vols. 1 and 2) sets out an agenda to think through a tension between human life and the technical. Briefly, Stiegler considers that the creation of all artifacts and technics is actually the exteriorization of human impulses into material form. (Words capture human speech, machines replicate human gestures, information technology substitutes for the human senses). This act is not simply the exteriorization of the subject into the world. It is also, at its most basic understanding, the act of "living" (forming consciousness) by means other than organic means. Humanity is always already technical, through both the co-constitution of humanity with technics as well as humanity's own self-constitution through exteriorization. For this reason, Stiegler confidently claims that interiority (of the subject) is nothing more than its exteriorization. By ascribing an originary technicity to human life, Stiegler wishes to move the political study of humanity beyond Rousseau's idea of "a pre-technical magical humanity: the magic unity is that which in effect, except for these key points, has not yet analytically separated forms from ground, that is, schema, which only later will become, as technical tools, movable objects." (Stiegler http://www.arsindustrialis.org/anamnesisand-hypomnesis, February 20, 2010)

Therefore, Stiegler's innovative approach to the experience of time and memory is not based simply on human perception. Instead, he makes it clear that human experience (of any kind) is only possible through the "movement" of consciousness between humans and technics, and that human experience itself unfolds through a back and forth relationship with technical objects that house externalized human impulses and ideas accumulated over time. Stiegler cites the development of the technical into its current manifestation as an industry of real time as an important factor for social theory to consider. However, this development of breaking the 'time barrier' (by means of real time) can be nothing short of a total redefinition of the form of the relationship between humans and technology. For Stiegler, the power of real-time technologies and the instantaneity of retrievable data is constitutive of the possible form(s) the resulting human-technical relation can take. Therefore, according to Stiegler's analysis, speed is constitutive of the evolving form(s) of human life itself. The imposition of real time privileges the circulation of information between machines and redefines the co-constitutive relationship between people and the technical.

If life is always already technical from its origin, then the experience of lived time is impossible without constituting human consciousness through technics and living through means of this co-constitution. In Heidegger's analysis of time, technics and instrumental rationality have enabled a form of revealing such that the "authentic temporality" of being is only possible through a rupture with the everyday "enframing" power of technology. "For Stiegler, however, everyday equipment or ready-to-hand beings available for use should be understood, rather, as the enabling condition- rather than the ontic obstruction of our phenomenological experience of temporality, above all our authentic appropriation of finitude or comportment towards death." (Sinnerbrink 2009) While he simultaneously finds inspiration and contention in Heidegger's work, Stiegler has an equally ambivalent relationship with Husserl's phenomenology. Husserl's work On Phenomenology and the Consciousness of Internal Time, identifies and details the primary and secondary retentions as constituting human memory. While these concepts are valid in Stiegler's view, Husserl makes a mistake by not also including the notion of tertiary retention, or the memory of culture in the form of external objects and the material (technical) systems in which we operate. Technics are tertiary retention, acting as constitutive systems of human memory, externalized impulses or actions. "If time-consciousness can be shown to rely on a mediation by a technically constituted object- what Husserl calls the temporal object- then the very

content of the self on Husserl's account, the consciousness of the self flowing in time, would itself be dependent on technical mediation." (Hansen 2004: 595) Through generations of interaction with external objects, human memory is inscribed in the technical, as we export our immediate primary retentions and remembered secondary retentions into words, pictures, recordings, art, digital data and other (im)material forms. This form of exteriorized memory "does not belong to the lived experience that is, for Husserl, the sole originary and constitutive realm." (Stiegler 2009a: 6) Rather, Stiegler introduces a totally new constitutive realm of the human-technical, simultaneously indicative of the experience of acting immediately as well as acting through the externalized memory of our technical surroundings.

Human interaction with these technical forms generates two results. These are indicative of a dual structure of experience. On the one hand, all these technical projections (as a tertiary form of a cultural past) act to replace/challenge primary retention (immediate memory) in the constitution of consciousness. The very form of their flow, and their reception by society, is determined by instrumental speed of the image sequence (how fast the images reach the human). On the other (Heideggerean) hand, the real time flow of virtual space creates a condition of experience where the formation of human consciousness is secondary to establishing a particular human orientation (or connectivity) toward information flows. The unfolding of experience through digital culture, social networking, mobile devices and big data is simultaneously the unconscious orientation of social behavior toward real time technology and big data. This social orientation toward interactivity is compatible with the technocratic management of social spaces, which justifies the expansion of big data initiatives and government and corporate information collection programs designed to capture "everything" about consumers.

Missing Data, New Algorithms and Pattern Recognition

I believe Stiegler is correct when he insists that the main political challenge of the hyperindustrial era will be the power struggle over the politics of memory, and perhaps more specifically, struggle of consciousness in real time. In this struggle, many actors may turn to strategic means such as data deletion to either assert their autonomy relative to the ubiquity of the networked information economy, or to manage their information data double in such a way that it helps them cope with the inevitability of losing the struggle for memory. However, as I argued earlier, the act of user-initiated deletion is still an affirmative act that requires an exercise of conscious or subconscious impulse. This exercise is an internal impulse that will inevitably become exteriorized in some form of external memory. In this sense, these impulses for deletion would be externalized in the data archives which govern the information architecture of our daily lives. The internal impulses of privacy, autonomy, defiance, or paranoia would find immaterial expression in the archives as blindspots, missing data and blanks.

As Mayer-Schönberger points out, big data "combine(s) innumerous bits of information about us, each one (at best) having been valid at a certain point in our past. But as it is presented to us, it is information from which time has been eliminated; a collage in which change is visible only as tension between two contradicting acts, not as an evolutionary process, taking place over time." (2009: 124) Archives as generative, algorithmically governed processes do not present contextless data, but rather generate data points through the combination and integration of existing data. Deleted data will be scrubbed from that algorithmic process and will alter the possible information that can be retrieved from the archive. However, I'd like to suggest that it is just a matter of time before the algorithms which govern these generative processes begin to take into account the exteriorized impulse to delete. The processes which mathematically tie data together to yield a specific search result can likely be rethought to tie data gaps together, based on recognizing patterns in user deletion habits, to yield a different, yet similarly dynamic and retrievable data image. There are two specific ways in which the conditions of archivization could evolve to make significant use of deleted data as a tool for organizing retained data. The first possibility is that data gaps will be filled in by a calculations meant to anticipate and approximate, based on available data sources, what would have been available had it not been deleted. The other possibility is that new algorithms may be developed to re-present a series of deleted data gaps to form a new piece of data based on pattern recognition.

First, consider Amelia II. Social scientist Gary King and colleagues recently tackled the "problem" of missing data by creating a software program, Amelia II, which runs a series of calculations to approximate the value of missing data points within data sets. They explain their program as such:

> Missing data is a ubiquitous problem in social science data. Respondents do not answer every question, countries do not

> collect statistics every year, archives are incomplete, subjects drop out of panels. Most statistical analysis methods, however, assume the absence of missing data, and are only able to include observations for which every variable is measured. Amelia II performs multiple imputation, a general-purpose approach to data with missing values. This method creates multiple "filled in" or rectangularized versions of the incomplete data set so that analyses which require complete observations can appropriately use all the information present in a data set with missingness. Multiple imputation has been shown to reduce bias and increase efficiency compared to listwise deletion. Furthermore, ad-hoc methods of imputation, such as mean imputation, can lead to serious biases in variances and covariances. Unfortunately, creating multiple imputations can be a burdensome process due to the technical nature of algorithms involved. Amelia II provides users with a simple way to create and implement an imputation model, generate imputed datasets, and check its using diagnostics. (Honaker, King and Blackwell 2011: 1-2)

This statistical software demonstrates that with the right statistical savvy, new data can be generated so as to effectively replace data. Of course, the problem here is that Amelia II's imputation method must assume "as most multiple imputation methods do, that the data are missing at random (MAR). This assumption means that the pattern of missingness only depends on the observed data Dobs, not the unobserved data Dmis." (Honaker, et al 2011: 3) This is precisely the exact type of assumption one cannot make when we consider data deletion as a method for navigating the power structures of information economies. The act of deletion tends to be deliberate, focusing on privacy or autonomous choice. It will certainly be employed toward specific sensitive or personal data and in an entirely non-random fashion. Thus, while the multiple imputation method is seemingly lacking in approximating non-randomly deleted information, the statistical wheels are in motion to develop big data analytical tools to overcome the obstacles that deliberate deletion may pose down the road.

Secondly, I'd also like to suggest that algorithms may be developed to piece together and generate new data based on the unintentional data points created when one chooses to delete information. Unlike the software package outlined above, this approach would not seek to complete a dataset with approximated values. Instead, such a proposed program would seek to generate a drastically unique representation of individuals based on the negation of their data profiles. They would sketch the space between data points to create a new data image. By recognizing patterns about when, how often, with what frequency, in what context and in conjunction with which other activities deletion takes place, algorithms may come into play that do not aim to fill in missing data gaps, but aim to generate an entirely different and drastically different data profile of individuals. This profile would be based not on what has been collected, but rather based on what one tries to hide.

According to Mayer-Schönberger, he believes that a major problem to easy retrieval which employs abstract categorizations is that (relatively speaking) it provides less contextual information/background than earlier methods of analog retrieval. (2009: 78) Yet, he also points out that software engineers are actively trying to overcome decontextualized retrieval by recontextualizing data for the searcher once the search is underway. (Mayer-Schönberger 2009: 79) It is all too predictable that the "recontextualizing" of data will include inputs from data generated through the analysis of deleted, obsolete or redundant information. If the impulse to hide data does get inscribed into the conditions of archivization and retrieval methods, it will be a direct reflection of the social desire for privacy or the sense of suspicion toward data surveillance. Ironically, the urge to delete will undoubtedly lead to new methods of analysis that seek to recontextualize through increasingly decontextualized data sources. Therefore, the process of data retrieval will become even more algorithmic and statistical and move even further away from Mayer-Schönberger's goal to "rehumanize" the social relationship with the permanence of digital data storage.

Conclusion: Inscribing Anxiety into the Digital

Between the recent announcements and revelations that U.S. government surveillance on its citizens was far greater than suspected, and the recent spike in both STS and humanities scholars exploring big data through humanistic and theoretical approaches, public consciousness about personal data security, data tracking and surveillance has definitely elevated. In turn, the simple observation that there is a heightened sense of concern about the relationship between individuals and "their" data prompted me to undertake this project. Undoubtedly, feelings are changing regarding ownership of data, collection and retention of information and how governments or corporations should be allowed to use such data. However, precisely because so many ethical questions and raw emotions have been stirred up by the recent debates on big data, we must stop to ask one last major question. Rather than focusing on the ownership of data (a legal question) or the ethics of big data and surveillance (ethical and political questions)

I believe it is important to ask a philosophical question about the technological conditions that make archivization possible.

Stiegler has demonstrated that our temporal consciousness can only come into existence through the interplay of primary, secondary and tertiary memory. Tertiary memory is externalized cultural memory in the form of technics, procedures, language, hardware, software and data, and the relative speed and intensity of our relationship with our external surroundings has allowed tertiary memory to over determine (relative to primary and secondary retentions) our consciousness in the present.

> Stiegler's theory of technics as tertiary memory is simultaneously a theory of the archive, technics as an ever-growing storehouse, the material/ideal manifestation and repository of human knowledge and experience. Moreover, under real-time computing and information dissemination, and the concomitant development of an unimaginable array of technologies for data and media storage in public and private, domestic and commercial settings, we find ourselves surrounded by technologies of the archive as much as technics as the archive. But archives are about more than simply the storage of information, of records of the past, of events. (Cooke: 2009)

If digital memory as tertiary memory is over determining the present human-technical relationship, we must ask: what memory and impulse will be inscribed into the digital and algorithmic fabric of tertiary memory if we choose to delete information? What impulses and emotions will become part of our cultural memory if we are inscribing blind spots into data which co-constitutes our existence? I argue that the primary feelings and emotions associated with data deletion are less about caution, prudence or Nietzschean will to power and more closely related to anxiety, suspicion, and fear of diminishing autonomy. I also argue that even the attempt to delete information (to hide that which represents our exteriorized interiors) is itself an externalized impulse that ultimately is inscribed into the technical environment through the process of individuation which occurs between humans and digital tools. Deletion does not simply remove memory from data stores. Because it involves a social process, multiple parties, varying costs and the creation of additional metadata, deletion is very much an active inscription into memory. This inscription permanently ties anxiety and suspicion into technical architecture in both the inscription of deleted data gaps, but also the metadata threads that emerge from the deletion process. This architecture, simultaneously composed of data and blindspots, operates in a constitutive manner in such a way that it will constantly reinscribe these impulses into populations as the process of technical individuation impacts the emergence of human consciousness in the era of big data.

As I have suggested, the urge to delete will lead to market-driven technological programs designed to overcome deletion through re-contextualizing, or approximating data. Or, new technological solutions will benefit from the urge to delete by creating programs that they can sell to consumers to assist them with the deletion process. The technical supplements that force consciousness to emerge in ways compatible with the speed of contemporary society will certainly absorb the anxiety and suspicion associated with data deletion in ways that will be revisited upon individuals. I am well aware that the transductive processes that Stiegler identifies seemingly point towards technological determinism capable of absorbing virtually any shock to the system. Many critics have pointed this out. However, let us also remember that Stiegler refuses to be a philosopher for the pessimists. His later work on education and long-circuit attention offers some potential progress to be made in the battle "for a politics of memory, and more precisely, for the constitution of sustainable hypomnesic milieux." (Stiegler http://www.arsindustrialis.org/anamnesisand-hypomnesis, February 20, 2010) Likewise, though Mayer-Schönberger does not seem to share Steigler's belief in the originary technicity of humans, he also proffers some potential aids in the fight for privacy and prudence through legal means, market mechanisms and cooperative social relationships. Though the battle for a politics of memory is complicated, the conscious choice to delete is not the answer. It is but a new factor that will certainly be incorporated into the architecture and algorithms of archives, and a factor that deserves more attention from social scientists, legal scholars, philosophers and information technology scholars.

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The Commodity as the Ultimate Monstrosity: Capitalism and the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, Or, Reading Marx's Capital Through Durkheim's Suicide

Mark P. Worrell

In a recent work on rampage shooters (Worrell 2014) I claimed that Durkheim's Suicide contains a multidimensional account of alienation and that this theory is not only compatible with but also extends the Hegelian-Marxist tradition of alienation theory.

Here, I shall briefly expand upon this idea, throwing the capitalist mode of commodity production into a new conceptual light that presages not the eventual collapse of capitalism under its own weight and inherent contradictions but, rather, the destruction of civilization as it descends into a death spiral of "morbid effervescence" and self-destruction. Specifically, I hope to demonstrate that the structure of the commodity relation embodies and reproduces the four fundamental aspects of alienation found in Suicide. Of course, the optimistic reading suggests that the reign of contradictions prefaces the eventual, revolutionary sublation of the present into a higher, progressive unity. However, given the current death grip the mainstream parties have on governance and war, the pessimistic reading is more plausible and more than adequately reflected in contemporary culture: the US is headed toward an abyss.[1]

Durkheim is famous for his insistence on treating social facts as things sui generis.

Social facts are ways of collectively acting, thinking, and feeling (either fixed or fluid) that are external, coercive, and irreducible, i.e., sui generis (Durkheim 1982: 50-59; see also Marx [1867] 1976: 1054; Simmel 1950: 10; Weber [1930] 2001: 19).[2] Social facts are objectively real (rather than merely subjective) and confront individuals and groups as 'alien' forces existing metaphorically 'over there' and against individuals and members.[3] The ultimate social fact of the modern world is capitalist commodity production where human life is subordinated to the production of carriers of surplus value:

> The social character of activity, as well as the social form of the product, and the share of individuals in production here appear as something alien and objective, confronting the individuals, not as their relation to one another, but as their subordination to relations which subsist independently of them and which arise out of collisions between mutually indifferent individuals. The general exchange of activities and products, which has become a vital condition for each individual – their mutual interconnection – here appears as something alien to them, autonomous, as a thing. In exchange value, the social connection between persons is transformed into a social relation between things... (Marx 1973: 157).

For Marx, a world of oppressive things confronting individuals and groups like a nightmare was a world of bourgeois alienation and fetishism (see Sayers 2011: 86-95 for a good discussion). Durkheim's terminology for this was a world transformed into monstrosities. For Durkheim, the disaggregated world produced by capitalism was one where four malevolent and destructive spirits held sway over individuals: egoism, anomie, altruism, and fatalism,

corresponding to the four ideal-typical forms of suicide. The first two were primary for modernity whereas it would appear, on the surface, that altruism and fatalism were extinct, relegated to only premodern societies. That is true on one level; however, the dialectical reading of Durkheim finds that where there is egoism, there is its opposite, altruism. Likewise with anomie and fatalism (for more on these forms of suicide and some composite formations, see Worrell 2013).

If we abstract out a portion of Durkheim's 'analytic octahedron' and focus specifically on these four ideal types of suicide we arrive at an X-shaped figure with a maelstrom at the middle, the death spiral of any society suffering from a loss of equilibrium (e.g., the American empire at the present).[4] This representation applies to a society that has undergone a process of total or partial desublimation, the destruction of the 'positive hell' of normal society and its devolution into a 'negative heaven' of warring spirits each commanding the premature death of the individuals and organizations that constitute a society.

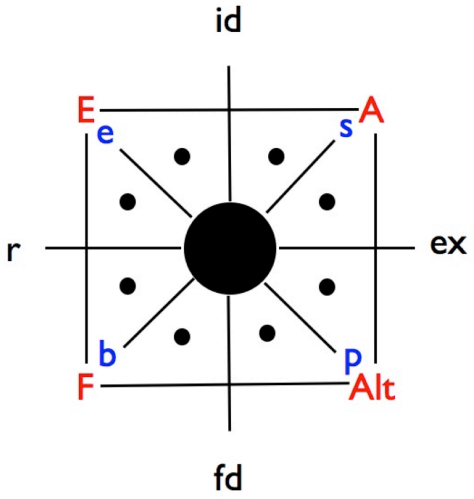

Diagram 1

The vortex at the center should be read in the light of Poe's A Descent into the Maelstrom ([1841] 1920) – not everything or everybody vanishes down the black hole. The liquidation or meltdown of a society is survivable and many may even appear to flourish in this 'negative heaven' of morbid accumulation, consumption, disorganization, and frivolity while others are pulled under entirely.[5]

Additional elements in this diagram can be skipped over for another time with our focus being on the corners in red and blue: the primary ideal typical forms of suicide and the corresponding forms of alienation.

- Egoism (literally, selfism) corresponds, positively, with over-individuation and, negatively, with lack of attachments to others. Egoism (E) is roughly analogous to a form of alienation known as **estrangement** (e).
- Altruism (literally, other-ism) corresponds, positively, with over-attachment to the other (or transcendental imaginary Other), and, negatively, to the insufficient development of the self and personality. In some ways, altruism intersects with "alterity" but we can set this aside for the time being. Altruism (Alt) corresponds to a form of alienation known as **possession** (p).
- Together, egoism and altruism form a solidarity axis and represent the extreme forms of dysfunction: lack of attachment and excessive attachment.
- Anomie (deregulation) is a problem of, basically, anarchy where individuals are forced to fall back on their personal resources to regulate their conduct – either impossible or contradictory. Anomie (A) corresponds to a form of alienation known as **splitting**, being divided, and being at odds with one's self (s).
- Fatalism (overregulation) represents a social form where individuals are subjugated and lacking any latitude for autonomous decision-making. Fatalism (F) corresponds to a form of alienation known as bondage, slavery, or subjection (b).

Like the duality of egoism and altruism, anomie and fatalism are terminal points on a continuum of control or regulation: lack and excess. A fresh, book-length analysis of Durkheim's classic analysis of self-destruction is sorely needed but, for the time, I will stop here at this schematic and unsatisfactory level and move on to the world of exchange value. When we shift from this well-known topology to the structure of the commodity relation, we find an analogous set of dynamics in operation.

Marx's diagrammatic analysis of the capitalist mode of production from volume two of Capital ([1884] 1978) is well known and can be condensed into this form for our present purposes:

M-C … P … C'-M'

Here, we will simply hone in on the structure of the commodity as it appears emerging from its negation as a labor product from the furnace of concrete production and its acquisition of a dual form, or, really, its sublimation and rise from the world of matter into the domain of things moral and authoritative.

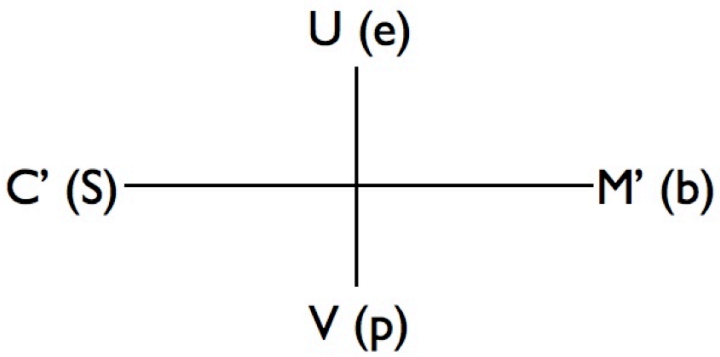

Diagram 1

The reduction of the labor product to a thing of worth splits or doubles the product into a thing that satisfies needs but also functions as a bearer or carrier of an impersonal moral substance: use-value and exchange-value.

This is very important: on the side of use-value, the "bearer" moment embodies both use and non-use depending upon the perspective of seller buyer and seller. As a use-value the commodity is also, simultaneously, a non-use-value, or, a generic raft or envelope (to the selling owner). As we can see here, anomic alienation is literally 'built into' the body of the commodity as use and non-use: it satisfies needs but only for those who both have money to gain access to its utility and recognize the claims of the commodity to be useful.

The other side of the split finds the commodity as a thing possessed by or possessing value. The body of the thing is reduced to a substance (abstract labor) and its magnitude (socially necessary labor time). These twin aspects of labor and time are unified under the indexicality of the price sign. These dual aspects, use and worth, are unified within the exchange relation where the commodity meets its other, the universal equivalent and, if all goes well, finds recognition and redemption.[6]

In a full-blown, postmodern consumer society based largely on credit and binging, we find the weird situation where people want things not because they satisfy real needs but because they embody an imaginary surplus, an enigmatic jouissance that, as soon as I pay for the commodity in order to appropriate this enjoyment, it vanishes (see Zizek's recent The Pervert's Guide to Ideology) into the social ether, setting up, of course, the endless procession of buying things (carriers of value) only to be left with a mountain of worthless husks of utility. So, we have some poor concrete thing that is simultaneously just a 'jelly' of abstract labor and a thing that is useful but is rendered superfluous at the moment it is acquired by the consumer because of the loss of its moral surplus. Mundane use is not enjoyable.

When we explode the inner logic of the commodity, we find a reproduction, of sorts, of the Durkheimian topology of alienation. We have already seen the splitting of the thing, doubling into the concrete and the abstract,

utility and value as well as the splitting into use and non-use.

As a bearer of surplus value (C') the commodity confronts the buyer as a social fact: external, coercive, and irreducible. As the means to the realization of surplus value, the commodity is, basically, the divinity of the modern world demanding sacrifices and obedience. We could pull material from Marx all day long to support this claim but it might be more interesting to call upon Weber, that supposed 'individualist' to bring the point home. Sounding positively Durkheimian and Marxist, with regard to the external facticity of capitalism, Weber said "The capitalistic economy of the present day is an immense cosmos into which the individual is born, and which presents itself to him at least as an individual, as an unalterable order of things in which he must live. It forces the individual, in so far as he is involved in the system of market relationships, to conform to capitalistic rules of action…" ([1930] 2001: 19).[7]

Together, the splitting or doubling and the resulting reduction of the capitalist life world to the status of a gulag correspond to the forms of alienation along Durkheim's regulation axis where we find anomic and fatalistic suicide. The commodity is the contradictory and simultaneous embodiment of anomie and fatalism – a fact we find repeated into Marx, Weber, and Durkheim. But that's not all.

The rupture between use and value also corresponds, roughly, with the dimensions of alienation we find along the solidarity axis whereby we locate the twin dimensions of estrangement and possession. The commodity as a useful thing is estranged or cut off from those that would use it, it is estranged from those that produced it, it is estranged from the owner, and it is estranged from its own universal form of being as a value (again, the contradiction between being simultaneously a use-value and a non-use-value). Moreover, as a carrier or bearer of value, the commodity is a sublime object possessed by an impersonal moral substance.

The enduring power of Durkheim's Suicide resides in his mapping the primary spirits of self-destruction to reveal that everyday life, even in a normal society, is founded on a whirlpool of negative, destructive energies and their crystallizations. Their synthetic sublimations in a normal society temper self-destruction to the level of repression and sublimation – socially approved and expected forms of self-negation. When society breaks down a greater number of 'autonomous' individuals are free to obey new orders, issued primarily by the spirits of anomie and egoism, to destroy themselves.[8] Durkheim intersects with Marx's analysis of capitalism in that we see that the world of free market commodity production and exchange (anarchy, egoism, class exploitation and bondage, and alterity) is a world that is, by definition, engaged in collective self-destruction. Unfettered capitalism is the road to suicide.

Endnotes

1. See as well Berthold-Bond's analysis of Hegel and madness. I find some interesting parallels between the discussion of 'madness' and what we typically refer to as sociological alienation. Note also, Durkheim does in fact refer to the suicide victim as one who resembles the type who would normally be found in the care of the alienist.

2. The hyper-atomized structure of contemporary social science often produces a nihilistic gaze that sees nothing where there should be something. If society is not a thing sui generis and reification is not a real process then there is nothing to society but the sum total of individuals. However, by 'thing', we do not intend to portray society as an object in the same way rocks and planks of wood are things. Society is not a static material edifice (see Cassano 2010: 4). For example, even an entertainment style (opera, tragedy, comedy, etc.) will constrain interpretation and action. "Your capacity for self-expression will have made its mark within a construct that has been ruled by certain still live and kicking social energies" (Trow 1999: 4).

3. With Sartre, however, we would qualify this by saying that the "over there is no more than a here..." ([1960] 2004: 404) in the same way that the Lacanian "Real" is not a replication of the idealist noumenal realm but the point of failure for processes of signification, where representation breaks down (Zizek 2001).

4. The literature built up around Durkheim's Suicide is quite voluminous and one is hard pressed to imagine that anything remains to be said regarding the concepts of egoism, altruism, anomie, and fatalism. Nevertheless, two interrelated features dominate the decades-long sociological commentary on Durkheim's famous four-cornered typology (Besnard 2005) of self-destructiveness: first, these concepts are almost universally preserved in their ideal-typical purity in ways that Durkheim did not intend (as McCloskey noted as far back as 1976 – and it is still generally the case more than thirty years later) resulting in a stultification of theoretical insight; secondly, related to the previous point, not much attention has been paid to what Durkheim called the "composite varieties"

of these concepts – the simultaneous "contradictory coexistence" of oppositional forces within one and the same society, institution, class, or self. In short, Durkheim's thought is littered with references toward these contradictory fusions of countervailing forces (i.e., in what we might refer to as the 'speculative identity' of contraries) whether we are interested the furtive relationship between empiricism and mysticism (1982: 74); the masked egoism of the humble servant (1982: 37); the Stoic desire to dissolve into the abyss of the infinite; Epicurean sects, and so on.

5. I also want to point readers in the direction of George Gissing's, The Whirlpool (1897) that also intersects with our interests in commercial failure and suicide.

6. What is important here, and occluded, is that the commodity has a double ternary structure.

7. Of the first rank of classical theorists, who was more fatalistic than Weber?

8. Where there is "autonomy" (auto-nomy, or, self-regulation) we must locate the counter-dimension of "heteronomy" (other-nomy, or, altruism combined with fatalism) operating in the background (or unconscious). The "autonomous" individual is not a goal but a symptom of diseased, bourgeois society. As Zizek would say of the autonomous individual in capitalist society: you are free to choose so long as you make the right choice.

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The Chinese Blogosphere as a Site of Social Engagement and Contestation

Jianxin Liu

The Chinese blogosphere is not identical to its English forerunners since its inception in 1999. From social constructivist (Doolittle and Hicks 2003) and connectivist (Downes 2007; Siemens 2005) perspectives, socio-cultural and political conditions, beliefs, and values as well as various practices of bloggers could have contributed to such dissimilarity, in addition to continued technological innovations and numerous networked communications. In this regard, it is worth examining the trajectory of the Chinese blogosphere in relation to social contingencies to understand the complex socio-technological interactions. Such a history-in-making account, though situated in a very short time span and not intended for producing a complete picture of Chinese blogs and the Chinese blogosphere, will be helpful for understanding the niche that has shaped this cultural space. It will be equally useful for furthering research in some of the emergent areas, as the following sections will reveal.

In what follows, this article provides a historical snapshot of the Chinese blogosphere. The analysis will then focus on describing several key aspects of the Chinese blogosphere including virtual elitism, political cynicism, commercialization, and gender reconstruction and empowerment to unpack the interactions between the virtual and the physical spheres. For this purpose, this article adopts a netographic line to frame the analysis of the Chinese blogosphere. Netography, through its connections with conceptions of virtual ethnography (Hine 2000; Hine 2005; Murthy 2008), textography (Smart 2008; Swales 1998), discourse studies (JØrgensen and Phillips 2002) and social semiotics (van Leeuwen 2005), emphasizes the researcher's online presence on the site as either an informed insider or a lurking observer (cf. Kozinets 2010).

A netographic account of the blogosphere confirms that the Chinese blogosphere as a site does not have a clear-cut border that is marked by legitimatized access. The distinction between participation and observation, as well as between various types and sources of text, also becomes blurry. A researcher online is researching the site as long as a research focus is present: identifying relevant persons, issues, and phenomena, collecting and accumulating data, evaluating significant emergences, and critiquing and theorizing ideas. A netographic account of the Chinese blogosphere in this regard is mainly concerned with who uses blogging, for what purposes, what kinds of blogging are recognized, how they develop and garner recognition, and who says what, in which channel, to whom, and to what effect (c.f. Danet 2001; Laughey 2007). The Chinese blogosphere, from this account, is then seen as a provocative example for researching digital media, alongside an ethnographic site for observing, experiencing, and exploring virtual social occurrences, and as a text for analyzing. A netographic framing thus facilitates the examination of the broad social situations around and beyond blogs as well as the immediate context embedded in individual blogs.

A Historical Snapshot of the Chinese Blogosphere

For a start, it is necessary to provide a brief historical snapshot of the Chinese blogosphere to contextualise the analysis. The blog, formerly known as the weblog, was introduced to the Chinese Internet in 1998, not long after its appearance in the United States. At its earlier stage, blogging tools were mostly used by IT communities in China, identical to the practice in the US. However, by the end of 2006, the number of blogs in Mainland China had

reached 60 million (CNNIC 2007) and become a mainstream social media space for average users. In 2006, a number of Chinese blogs such as Laoxu Boke, one of China's female celebrities, were ranked at the top of the blogosphere according to the statistics from Technorati (www.technorati.com). By the end of 2008, the population of the Chinese blogosphere had virtually outnumbered that of the United States (CNNIC 2008).

When compared to international examples, the Chinese blogosphere is young but it is catching up quickly. The importance of Chinese blogs as media, instruments for business, education, and research, and channels for personal expression is becoming widely recognized. Over just a few years, its influence has been extended from the blogosphere to other parts of the Chinese Internet and societies. A growing number of Chinese journalists are also blogging, providing a greater variety of information and analysis than they are able to do in their official news outlets. Some Chinese academics have begun to use blogs as a platform for discussing and publicizing their research. Some educators are using blogs to share curriculum and communicate with students. A few Chinese government officials at the local and national levels have taken blogging as a way to improve communication with their constituencies. Some people have turned to blogs in order to publicize human rights violations that they or their loved ones have experienced, and to appeal for justice when being prevented from obtaining legal services.

The Chinese blogosphere is unique. Technologically identical with other blogospheres, though minor differences do exist due to cost and intellectual property right constraints, the Chinese blogosphere has developed its own characteristics due to the authoritarian political system and Confucian sociocultural tradition. Increasing interest among Chinese and overseas scholars in the phenomenon of Chinese blogs has resulted in a number of publications in the past few years. Inside China, some of these studies have explored, for example, how blogs can improve second language teaching and learning, for bettering school literacy education, and for facilitating communication between teachers and students. Other studies have discussed the prospective application of blogs to businesses in terms of, say, marketing and public relations (e.g., Cheng 2005; Mo 2005). As Zhou (2006) summarizes in his survey of the blog-related publications archived in the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), the majority of the early research in blogs in Chinese focussed on the applications of blogging for educational and commercial purposes. These studies are either introductions to blogs as a whole, or reflective descriptions and commentaries of blogs and certain blog phenomena.

Research conducted by some so-called independent research centres is rather dubious in that their aim of featuring 'blog research' is for gaining currency through branding their contribution to blogs such as several pioneering Chinese bloggers, mass media and new-born profit-driven Internet research labs (e.g., http://research.bokee.com). Aside from the credibility of this kind of research, there is also an overt neglect of the fact that Chinese blogs have increasingly become a culturally and linguistically significant phenomenon and entity, which is worth in-depth research.

In recent years, research on the social impact of blogs upon Chinese society has also risen. Some researchers (Xiao, 2006; Zhou, 2008) argue that the emergence of blogs in the Chinese Internet has been revolutionary as it has helped blur the boundaries between the public and private sphere, leading to a state of so-called 'carnival' (kuanghuan) (see Farrell 2005). They contend that the popularity of blogs in the Chinese Internet may reflect the public's growing discontent with the elite discourse that has dominated Chinese media both online and offline. Researchers have addressed the effect that blogs may have had on certain social practice. For instance, Ye (2006) examined a famous writer Yu Hua as a case to explore how blogging has influenced the style, the content, and the reception of his writing (blogging). The clash between traditional literary writing and blogging, as Ye points out, is inevitable and transformative for the literary world.

Outside China, concerns have been directed at influences of blogs on the progress of democracy (such as China digital times at http:/www.chinadigitaltimes.net; Danwei at www.danwei.tv), the formation of civic society (He, Caroli, and Mandl 2007; Lih 2004; Lum 2006; MacKinnon 2007; MacKinnon 2008; Zittrain and Edelman 2003), and censorship (Zittrain and Edelman 2003). These organizations and research have principally seen blogs as a better window, medium, and channel than the traditional mass media, for understanding Chinese society and its evolving social networking systems. China Digital Times (http://chinadigitaltimes.net/), for example, is a blog-like bilingual news website founded by Xiao Qiang, an adjunct professor at University of California at Berkeley in 2003. It provides independent reporting, translations from Chinese cyberspace, perspectives from across the geographical, political and social spectrum, and daily recommendations of readings from the Chinese blogosphere. Though not purely research-oriented, the news and analysis it has collected has produced a useful database for researching Chinese blogs, especially those blogs with political orientations.

He et al. (2007) compared differences between Chinese and German blogs by analysing 700 blog pages and

exploring how far these distinctions can be identified and related to known cultural differences between the two countries. They found that Chinese blogs are more graphically oriented and more attentive to the communication between bloggers and commentators than German blogs. They suggest that cultural idiosyncrasies such as collectivism (Chinese) and individualism (German) may be the major factor that has resulted in these differences. Their study, regardless of lack of fine-grained differentiation of types (personal or collective; video, photo, podcasting) and phases (early or recent) of Chinese blogs, suggests that researchers should be aware of the influence of cultural (as well as linguistic) factors in conducting blog research.

MacKinnon (2007) analyses the importance of blogs for China correspondents and calls for more comparative research so that the relationship between blogs and international news can be better understood. From this point of view, Mackinnon (2008) further argues that blogs may be a catalyst for long-term evolutionary political change because they help enlarge the space for collaboration and conversation on subjects not directly related to political activism.

Chinese Blogs: Characterization and Controversies

Alongside the netographic line, the following sections of this article will describe several distinct features of the Chinese blogosphere in relation to Chinese sociocultural and political traditions and trends such as the Confucian tradition of elitism and self-censorship.

Translation, Legitimation, and Social Elitism

To understand the Chinese blogosphere requires an understanding of how elitism operates in the nation. It is known that the original formation of the blog was propelled by the grassroots desire for (active and meaningful) social (and especially political) participation but the blog's inroad to the Chinese websphere was initiated and constructed by elite social groups. These are the people who had earlier access to the web spheres than the average Chinese and who had the capacity to capitalize on these resources. The trajectory of the Chinese blogosphere, from its very beginning, was a top-down momentum. Instead of a movement for the powerless to question and challenge the powerful, it was manipulated by elite groups to maximize their gains in whichever ways were possible. It was only until as late as 2003 when a group of female bloggers such as Muzi Mei, Zhuying Qinttong, and Liumang Yan started blogging that the elites' manipulation all of sudden started to crack. The use of blogs has since erupted among average Internet users, consequently leading to the so-called grassroots movement of Chinese blogs. Still, attempts to reinstall, restore, and reinforce elitism into the blog-like social networking media were visible from the translating practice of the original English term of blog into Chinese and have never waned ever since.

During the early days of the Chinese blogosphere, three translations of the term blog were used interchangeably, namely, 网记(wangji), 网志 (wangzhi), and博客(boke), each of them as a text indexing certain social intentions and actions. The first two names are literal translations of blogs with minor differences. Wangji was a shortened name for网络日记 (wangluo riji) describing the blog as online or web diaries. In addition to the denotation of Wangji, Wangzhi, a shortened name for wangluo rizhi, places an emphasis on the possible role that blogs may have for personal development and attainment through blogging. It is known that the Chinese character Zhi has another layer of meaning of setting personal goals besides recording activities and events.

Strangely, the third translation, boke, has little semantic relevance to the blog. It is neither a literal nor a free translation of blog; rather, it is a coinage of two seemingly different characters. The first character博 (Bo) refers denotatively to being learned, knowledgeable, to the academic degree Doctor of Philosophy (boshi xuewei), or academics with a PhD degree who would be regarded as social elites responsible for authoritative knowledge production and interpretation. Similar to the Taiwanese translation部落格 (Buluoge), which translates the blog phonetically, the pronunciation of Bo is roughly close to the sound of the first letter of blog. The second character客 (Ke), following the translation fashion of other Internet terms such as hackers (黑客Heike), geeks (红客Hongke), Flashmakers (闪客 Shanke), and wikipedia contributors (维客Weike), is known in Chinese either as distinguished guests of the powerful or professionals. Without providing adequate background knowledge, Boke can easily conjure up an image among blog newbies of elite professionals who enjoy authoritative status in certain fields.

Disputes over the translation of the term blog into Mandarin Chinese were rampant among the pioneers. Although the first two versions appeared earlier, they were outnumbered soon by Boke and have become largely

invisible in the Chinese blogosphere and the web sphere. The competition for naming blogs in Chinese is not simply about names; rather, it embodies the tension over power among various social groups of interest. From a historical perspective, naming an object or a phenomenon is a complex issue and can incur profound consequences. In Confucian text such as Lunyu, inappropriate naming in its very extreme can impair personal wellbeings and national solidarity. It is evident that the preference of Boke over the other two names implies a stronghold of Confucian elitism and the victory of the elite over the ordinary in the Chinese blogosphere from the very outset.

Fang Xingdong, self-elevated as the "Father of Chinese blogs", envisioned blogs in China as a prime means for business and governing. Fang's idea, inherently a manifestation of social elitism, was shared by many other bloggers. He may regard himself as a superior gentleman (Junzi) in the Confucian sense empowered to define for the Chinese bloggers what the blog is and to instruct them how to blog. On the other hand, Anti, a well-known Chinese blogger, regarded blogs much as columnist syndicates for producing opinion leaders. In his view, the grip on the discursive power inscribed in blogs is the key for developing a business model and enhancing profits; that is, whoever dominates the blog discourse can take the lion's share of the market. For them, the Chinese blogosphere opens up new opportunities for making fortunes, creating celebrities, and garnering public attention due to blogs' capacity to aggregate opinions, thereafter creating and modelling new lifestyles for the average person.

The elitist imperative permeates the development of the Chinese blogosphere and blogs via the translation of the term, the popularity of blog columnists, the attention to celebrity blogs, and the promotion of so-called grassroots blogs. The resistance to the populist from the elites, especially those who are in control of political power, is manifested in every possible aspect of the Chinese blogosphere. As such, some personal blogs may well be a fabrication concocted by certain groups with higher social standings to tame or shape the public's opinions and imaginations (Nie and Li 2008). The owner of a personal blog, in other words, may not be a single person but a team or teams with a carefully conceived agenda or strategic plan. Similar personal blogs founded by various departments of local and central governments are also seen everywhere, though disguised as independent individuals.

Censorship and Resistance

In addition to the persistence of China's elitism, the interplay between the Chinese authority's censorship on the Internet and its netizens' reaction is a key factor that has influenced the Chinese blogosphere and its development. In Mainland China, under the Communist Party's rule, the media is regarded as the mouthpiece of the Party and the government. It is largely controlled and constantly censored by the Chinese Communist Party Propaganda Department. Although commercialization has provided spaces for entertaining, educating, and informing the masses, the state maintains a strong censorship of any news that may impact on the Party's control (Fu 2005). Rules and regulations on which the censorship is based, though never known to the public, are enforced by media institutions and publishers at different levels (Jiao 2007). From the mid-1990s onwards, the Department began permitting several so-called privately-run media outlets but its restrictions over their operations have rarely been relaxed. The arrival of the Internet has nevertheless posed a great threat to the Department's control and has forced it to develop new censoring mechanisms such as the China National Network and Information Centre (CNNIC), the Internet Society of China (ISC), and the Great Firewall (GFW). Likewise, the growth of blogs has occurred under strict surveillance from the day blogs first entered the Chinese Internet.

Internet censorship in China takes three basic forms: blocking, content filtering, and official registration. Blocking is mainly targeted at overseas websites and services that have been blacklisted as unfriendly and harmful. It can be either permanent or temporary depending on the content of websites and China's political situation. Content filtering prevents Chinese Internet users from viewing sensitive or improper web content (Pan 2006). Such content as the events of Tian'anmen Square, the on-going calls for democracy, Taiwan independence, and Tibetan independence are inaccessible to the Chinese residents. Other content such as pornography, which had been left largely unattended for a long period of time, has recently received official attention in an upsurge of public condemnation of moral decay (Zittrain and Edelman 2003). The Great Firewall has become the most notoriously developed Internet software used to filter and block information from outside China.

Websites and web service providers are required to regulate their web content and to assist the government in cracking down on pornography websites, services, or agents. They have been requested to submit website details to CNNIC for official registration since November 2005. Chinese authorities can order web service providers to provide their customers' confidential information whenever necessary. For example, in 2005, MSN Space gave away a political dissident's blog identity to the China National Network and Information Centre, which led to his arrest

and the shutdown of a number of blogs (Wood and Smith 2005).

For their own safety, the majority of bloggers have not become involved in political debates and have avoided explicit sex presentations when constructing their blogs. Censorship has influenced and will continue to influence the development of Chinese blogs in terms of blog types, functions, genres, and content. Dissatisfaction in the Chinese websphere, however, has grown. For example, in 2006 some Chinese bloggers, who were unhappy with the Great Firewall's blocking of Google which provides a free searching service, used cyber-voodoo to express their anger (MacKinnon 2006), as shown in Figure 1. The text at the top left of this image says: "This person has made it impossible to access Google." The text on the bottom says: "A click on this website equals one needle prick."

A variety of strategies in and through software has been created by Internet users to circumvent the Great Firewall and avoid being identified (Lum 2006; Zittrain and Edelman 2003). One of the many ways used is to manipulate words in search of sensitive content. For example, some users use Chinese characters with the same pronunciation to avoid their content being filtered. Some separate phrases that might be searched with spaces to deceive the filtering mechanism. Some users have even used the traditional Chinese way of writing from right to left vertically to publish their opinions. Anti-filtering and anti-blocking softwares are also being developed by individuals and organizations to circumvent the Great Firewall. Many proxy-hunting softwares (such as Freegate and Ultrareach) are available for free downloading and some are even sent by certain organizations (such as Falun Gong) to users via emails, MSN, and other communication tools.

Conflicts between the censor and the censored are numerous in Mainland China and the authorities are not always victorious. For example, the Chinese Industry and Communication Ministry's demand that all computers sold in China after July 1st 2009 preinstall a filtering software Green Dam Youth Escort (Luba huaji huhang). The filtering software was supposedly designed to protect children and teenagers from pornographic and violent content while its hidden agenda was to monitor computer users' activities. This software could record computers users' information and report it back to the company and the government. The infamous project was strongly challenged by average Internet users, IT professionals, diplomats and was consequently postponed, perhaps permanently. The incident was arguably regarded as the first major victory of Chinese Internet users over the autocratic censorship of the government (Bradsher 2009). However, the victory might have resulted from a strategic compromise from the Chinese authority. According to Lagerkvist and Sundqvist (2013), as long as the regime's legitimacy remains intact, the Chinese authority can even encourage so-called "loyal dissents" to flag its political tolerance and transparency.

It is inevitable that the balance of political and social power and control is shifting as the use of and the dependence upon the social media deepens (Esarey and Qiang 2008). The blog-like social media (including micro-blogging) can be used and manipulated as a medium, tool, and space for political and social change in China but should not be mistaken for the sole cause of social and political change (Goldsmith and Wu 2006; MacKinnon 2008), which are encompassed by complex social, economic, and political forces.

Entertainment, Tabloidization, and Political Cynicism

Another distinctive feature of the Chinese blogosphere is its concentration on entertainment and its trend

towards tabloidization. It is noticeable that the majority of Chinese bloggers rarely express overt political opinions, especially those pertinent to the Party's power construct. Political statements, if any, are either opaquely expressed or constrained by the owners themselves or by the censors. Many of the popular bloggers would rather excessively deploy irony, parody, and innuendo that require their readers to read between the lines. With a deeply rooted fear of prosecution, reinforced by the memory of the past sufferings before and around 1989 and the present tightening of ideological boundaries, bloggers interested in political issues have to closely follow clearly understood but 'unspoken' rules. Democracy, for example, may be a trendy word used frequently in government announcements and reports and in talks of many government officials; in actual application, the meaning of democracy has a clear-cut distinction among Party and non-Party members (Zhao 1998). Issues such as multi-party system, general election, and separation of powers are totally prohibited from even being mentioned in media and other channels. Other topics such as the Tian'anmen Square massacre, Falungong, and Tibetan independence can never overtly appear, except in condemnations of these movements in the Party's publications. In other words, any political discussion on blogs that has the intention of denying or weakening the Party's legitimacy and reign would be forbidden and punished.

Such a political climate has many consequences on the Chinese blogosphere as the majority of its participants are self-claimed intellectuals or professionals. Many of them, educated in the Party's schooling system, employed in public service sectors, promoted by way of continued education at provincial or the Central Party Schools (dangxiao; a higher education institution designed for professional development of the Chinese Communist Party's high profile members) are the beneficiaries of the shares distributed among powerful interest groups. Irrespective of the size of their share, their status in China is in rather stark contrast to the commoners such as workers and peasants who have been sophisticatedly and clandestinely exploited and oppressed before and after the Opening and Reform. Bloggers, under such circumstances, may instinctively choose to take an opportunist approach. Political expediency in this sense is commonplace: many of the bloggers continue taking the Party's side and some of them are alleged to be accomplices of the Party disguised as blog columnists or popular grassroots bloggers to influence public opinions as opinion leaders. Some of these have been publicly recognized such as Yu Qiuyu and Wang Zhaoshan, given their experience in Mao's period and connections with the authoritarian institutions and media. Some are not easy to identify such as Han Han, Guo Jingming, and Acosta who are idols of the younger generations of the 1980s and 1990s. These bloggers form the pro-Party alliance composed of various groups and generations in the Chinese blogosphere.

For those bloggers who are unwilling to cooperate with the Party's propaganda machine, cynicism offers a practical alternative to either eluding or resisting this situation without directly confronting the Party. Usually, their blogging would be themed with lifestyle content such as fashion, travel, pets, and games, enabled by the continued economic growth, a major achievement the government is apt to take credit for.

Figure 2 is a visual collage of four sections of the front-page of the Xinlang blog service provider (henceforth BSP) in 2006. As it illustrates, the eighteen channels or tags, by which the content of blogs are linked to wider communities, are labelled entertainment, sports, culture, women, IT, finance, automobiles, real estate, education, games, military, constellation, cooking, interior design, babysitting, health, photos, and e-magazine. Among these popular tags in sections b), c), and d), many of them are about entertainment celebrities such as Li Yapeng and Zhang Liangying, and other tags are related to entertainment, sports, foods, and travel. No channels or tags are entitled politics, current issues or affairs. In fact, on the homepage of the Xinlang BSP, there is only one sub-channel entitled 'point of view' (guandian), which includes blog entries which discuss certain non-politically provocative social issues.

Probably only a small proportion of Chinese blogs are designed for providing entertainment services while the majority are set up for miscellaneous ends. However, visiting the homepage of many of Chinese BSPs will certainly give an impression that entertainment-oriented blogs are prevailing, if not monopolizing, the Chinese blogosphere. On many BSPs such as Xinlang BSP, the entertainment section is the most popular (see Figure 2) teeming with celebrities, gossips, tabloid news, and other. For example, the number one popular blog on Xinlang BSP is Laoxu Boke, whose owner is an entertainment celebrity famous for her singing, writing, acting, and directing (see Figure 1). Her blog is then not just a personal blog but a hub for her fans to express their admiration for their star and at the same time exchange information and develop communities related to the stardom of Xu. It is also a place where Xu presents her relationship with her fans and other parties such as film producers, agents, and colleagues to the public, consequently creating a space for group or team promotions instead of just promoting an individual pop star.

Personal blogs are further exploited by paparazzi, a newly emergent occupation in free market China, for disseminating material to the tabloids about the celebrities. By publicizing celebrities' private lives, tabloid magazines, journals, and websites make profits while celebrities retain and expand their publicity, consequently leading to a win-win situation, regardless of some so-called urge for privacy protection. Take Sohu BSP for instance. The number one popular blog is not authored by a celebrity or a public figure but by Song Zude, who is an entertainment reporter or paparazzi known for his bluntness and outrageous spying.

The prevalence of entertainment and tabloid content in the Chinese blogosphere may correspond with China's continuing economic prosperity in the past three decades as well as Chinese people's demand for lifestyle change such as leisure and holidays. In this regard, it may also indicate the Chinese public's reluctance to pursue social goals at the expense of their hard-earned lifestyle change through political reforms or structuring, not to mention revolutions. An overemphasis on or dominance of such sections may indicate an indifference caused by political pressure. Nevertheless, it is understood that different social dynamics are in formation for visibility as well as legitimacy.

Portalisation and Commercialization

In alignment with the prevailing tabloidization, the quest for profit or commercial interest is another driving force that has changed the landscape of the Chinese blogosphere at an early stage. Portalisation is the tendency of bloggers to redevelop their blogs into personal web portals. An individual blog, instead of simply publishing personal updates, syndicates a number of services such as websites, chat rooms, forums, journals, conferences that may potentially transform blogs into commercial organizations. In fact, portalisation is especially popular with celebrity and A-list bloggers. For example, Laoxu boke (www.blogs.sina.com.cn/laoxu), a female celebrity blog, is operated as part of the blogger's own personal web (blog) portal. As Figure 3 illustrates, Laoxu's blog portal includes her profile (about Jinglei) and a hyperlink to her blogsite (Laoxu's blog), online chat service (chat rooms for Jinglei's community), a bulletin board system (BBS for Jinglei's community, and a fan community (Jingmeng or Jinglei's community). In addition, it links her two businesses (Flower Village and Shops at Jinglei's community) as well as a downloading service (downloads at Jinglei's community) she personally financed. A blog in this sense has gone beyond being purely a personal space and may perform a number of related functions, services, and communities.

Individual bloggers' interest in portalising their blogs is directly influenced by their BSPs. Unlike BSPs in English-speaking countries such as Live Journal and Wordpress, the majority of Chinese BSPs have been developed from web portals such as Xinlang (www.sina.com.cn) and Sohu (www.sohu.com). Consequently, these BSPs may have many features in common with the web portals with which they are associated. Such a way of providing blogging services is a strategic move to enlarge the web portals' market share through simulating content, consumers, and consequently the market. Blogs hosted on these BSPs are consequently encouraged to develop their own personal portals when

their popularity reaches a threshold, for realizing various purposes such as profit and popularity.

(Note: in brackets are translations of the Chinese text)

Commercial interest is a driving force that has shaped the development of the Chinese blogosphere and blogs. By providing blog services, BSPs not only expand their market share but also compete for customers. Bloggers in this sense have little common ground with traditional customers. They are the customers of certain BSPs as receivers of their hosting and other content services. However, rather than paying their BSPs for hosting services, bloggers contribute their time and energy to creating content in return, not just for themselves but also for their BSPs, in line with respective regulations, customer agreement, or the code of conduct. In particular, bloggers are requested to allow their BSPs to access their registered information. Blogs, including their owners, become an asset of their BSPs and even, possibly, their products, depending on their capacity and BSPs marketing plans. An alliance, then, is formed, especially among certain powerful groups of blogs. The sections on those BSPs, for example, are not simply a collection of tags or themes; rather, they could be seen as a way to brand the blogs according to their content and influence. Understandably, the more influence a blog has, the more buying power it brings to the BSP. That blogger, clearly, would have more power in bargaining with the blog service and more incentives to offer to the BSP for better service as well as financial return. The dissolving or blurred border between business and customers then complicates the traditional understanding of commercialization.

Gender, Sex, and Female Bloggers' Presence

Apart from the above-discussed features, the most remarkable difference between the Chinese blogosphere and the Western (English-language) blogosphere which was characteristically dominated by male bloggers, was the predominant influence of female bloggers at the early stage of the Chinese blogosphere. Although blogs were introduced to the Chinese websphere by several male bloggers in 1999, the most well-known blogs by 2006 were mostly authored by female bloggers such as Liumang Yan, Furongjiejie, Anyawa, Yuwang nüshen, Hongyi jiaozhu, Eryue yatou, to mention just a few. It was only at the end of 2006 that a number of male blogs such as Duyao, Jidi Yangguang, Bijibijie, Shangdong'erge, Furong gege, and Yaofeiniangniang began to emerge in the Chinese blogosphere.

Two hypotheses may account for this difference. First, early blogs were considered personal journals or diaries that are seen as feminized. Some research (Lu 2008), for instance, indicates that more women than men preferred keeping diaries and revealing their experiences, emotions, feelings, and desires. Although the reliability of some such findings could be problematized, to some extent they offer alternative interpretations of women's dominance in the early phase of the Chinese blogosphere to the mainstream account. Second, blogs provide Chinese women an unprecedented space for voicing their identities and subjectivity (Jiang & Wang, 2005. Such early gender imbalance may then be a reflection of the tension between genders, predominately men and women, or an intermittent swing of gender power.

Sexual content is prevalent in the Chinese blogosphere. Some are related to gendered relations and lifestyles; for example, gender roles of women and men are variously described in fashion blogs in relation to clothing, shopping,

or body-building. Most of them are situated in urban contexts, especially in metropolitan cities of Shanghai, Beijing, or Guangzhou and authored by people from various occupations including from public service sectors. Some blogs, with little heed to the regulations, update explicit depiction of sexual content such as sexual intercourse and nudity. The early group of female Chinese blogs including Muzi Mei, Zhuying Qingtong, and Sister Lotus are good examples of this kind. Yet, due to the influence of blog censorship, the so-called "explicit" content might be seen as "implicit" to many viewers in the Western countries and could not be considered instances of soft porn.

Different as they are, these types of sexual content are built upon sexuality as well as desire, and their representations are socially situated and conditioned. For example, the popularity of Mu Zimei's sex blog (which was later compiled as Yiqing shu) can hardly be understood without careful consideration of the historical context of sex in China and its current configurations. Many researchers and bloggers would agree that Muzi Mei has become, on any account, a symbol of the Chinese blogosphere rather than a single female blogger and a particular type of Chinese blog (Jiang and Wang 2005). To some extent, Muzi Mei together with her followers such as Zhuying qingtong, Liumang yan, and Eryue yatou has overshadowed the path of the Chinese blogosphere and the social-political situations in which it occurs.

Traditionally, though sex has been accused of being a source for improper conduct in dominant Confucian teachings and some Buddhist beliefs, it has never been officially criticized or disavowed in practice. Even in the Song Dynasty when Cheng and Zhu Confucianism was the mainstream, stating, "maintaining the universe order but cleansing human desires", the abandonment of sexual activities remained only in words but had never been widely practiced. On the contrary, studies in fields such as anthropology, history, and literature have shown that Chinese culture is abundant in diverse sex representations in various forms of literature, music, performances, and fine arts (Cecilia Lai-wan, Eric, and Celia Hoi-yan 2006). The fact that almost no emperor has ruled out prostitution, either state-run (公娼gongchang) or private-owned (私娼sichang), indicates that sex transactions were not rendered as crime by law; part of high court officials' and intellectuals' social life was rather fashioned by their romantic relations with sex workers in brothels (青楼/妓院qinglou/jiyuan). Even homosexual activities and relations (男风nanfeng) were not uncommon among concubines, high officials, intellectuals, and landlords at the imperial court. A number of genres of Chinese poetry were dedicated to describing the life of prostitutes and their relations with the poets. The reasons for this co-existence, however, are not the concern of this article.

This tradition, however, was disrupted when the Chinese Communist regime came into power in 1949 (Liu and Finckenauer 2010). Under the name of purification, prostitution was eradicated, polygamy and gay relations eliminated, and sexual activities enclosed in households only between officially married couples for the purpose of reproduction. Romantic relationships between opposite sexes was demonized as capitalist poison and therefore prohibited. Even marriage needed approval from the government officials (领导lingdao) of an institution (单位danwei); its successful approval depended on the couple's class (出身chushen). Apart from ideological and technological constraints, absolute impoverishment also prevented the majority of Chinese from pursuing sexual pleasures. It is then not a surprise, after economic austerity became history, that sex-related content serves as a trigger and stimulus for blogging in Mainland China given the strict censorship of traditional media such as printed media, radio, and TV (Johannen, Gomez, and Gan 2004). Practically, in new media such as blogs, accessing to enforce control is not always feasible, which further encourages the rampancy of sex-related publications and the quick formation of like-minded groups and communities in the Chinese blogosphere.

Concluding Remarks

The long tradition of Confucian elitism, reinforced by the widening class segregation and the paradox between rapidly increased population and dwindling (natural and social) resources in the 21st century (Fan 2010), has profoundly shaped the course of the Chinese blogosphere and blogs. The Party's omnipresence and its desire to cling to power have further complicated the power relations. Some groups have benefited from the opportunities endorsed by this power structure, some groups have been resistant, but the majority of blog users have learned to become resilient to pressures by choosing to avoid conflicts unless provoked or cornered. Compromise among these social groups is variously reached in forms of nationalism and personal flaming. In other words, the Chinese blogosphere has become a site on which various social parties, groups, and societies are competing to express their power and voice.

More significantly, the nature and infrastructure of the blog has welded the Chinese blogosphere into an unprecedented world for business in which the division between enterprises and their customers has become almost invisible. Every blog is a potential product carrying a certain brand name, be it the name of a blog service provider or even an abstract name such as happiness. The blogosphere, therefore, is creating internet syndicate through content while at the same time making such agglomeration an unlikely occurrence given the diversity of Chinese bloggers and the divergence amongst them.

Sexual desire in this regard prepares an almost automatic response to oppression as either resistance or reclusion. In so doing, it does to a greater extent help change the status quo of gender relations and positions in the Chinese blogosphere and society. The Chinese blogosphere, while preserving the history and resource of the Chinese languages, provides an alternative for the revival of not only the Chinese language but also of other semiotic means. Chinese blogs and their aggregation as a blogosphere is primarily valuable for research into the Chinese websphere and society.

It seems that Chinese blogs are becoming increasingly web portal-like, featuring content such as sex, entertainment, and personal details, while at the same time avoiding interest in sensitive political issues. Factors such as economic growth have had a direct impact upon Chinese bloggers' lifestyle representations. Other factors such as political correctness may implicitly affect the content of Chinese blogs and their way of blogging. Considering the critical function of blogs as a space for personal and collective expression, the tension between institutional surveillance and bloggers' resistance plays an important role in shaping the Chinese blogosphere and the characteristics of blogs.

The review of research in Chinese blogs at home and abroad suggests that there is a need to consider Chinese blogs as socio-culturally situated, conditioned, and evolving. Nardi et al. (2004) point out that blogging is a congregation of social activity in which blogs create the audience and the audience creates the blog at the same time. The Chinese blogosphere, then, is not a closed world but part of a larger communication space in which diverse media and face-to-face communication may be brought to bear. New affordances featured on blogs have greatly enhanced the depth of text and fostered a stronger articulation of the social (Davies and Merchant 2006; Davies and Merchant 2009). These dynamic connections challenge conventional conceptions of writers and readers as well as of text in online environments (Miller and Shepherd 2004; Miller and Shepherd 2009). Emergent social contingences in the Chinese blogosphere discussed in this article are disproportionately investigated given their impact on and significance for Chinese society. Further investigations are necessary and critical for understanding the blogosphere's influence over Chinese society, culture, and vice versa.

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Go to Darwin and Starve, Ya Bastard: Theorizing the Decline of Third Tier Cities

Tara Brabazon

Family stories weave in and out of sanitised, reified national histories. Colonized nations such as Australia, the United States, Canada and Aotearoa / New Zealand are built on a pioneering myth of white 'settlers' and 'explorers' moving through a landscape and 'discovering' mountains and rivers. The 'other side of the frontier'[1] – of genocide, sickness and institutional racism against indigenous peoples who were not granted the right of citizenship – sits uncomfortably within the propulsive narrative of progress and economic development. These stories summon unexpected, interwoven histories of progress and development, injustice and discrimination. My parents – both in their eighties – maintain distinctive stories that cut through the clouded narratives of colonialism. Kevin and Doris Brabazon married in Broome in 1950. Broome is a coastal town in the north-west corner of Western Australia. After his Perth-based apprenticeship, Kevin started work as a carpenter at the Broome meat works. Doris worked in Streeter and Male, the general store of the town.[2] Doris had just turned 20. Kevin was 23. Broome was a tough, but intriguing place. My mother describes it as a town of music, money, fun and laughter. White men and women lived in the town, but were not dominant. Yawuru men and women were the majority,[3] even though they did not have the rights of citizenship or the freedom of movement below the Tropic of Capricorn.[4] Strong minority communities were also present from Japan, many having faced internment during the war,[5] China, Indonesia and the Philippines.[6]

One man living in Broome at this time was Con Gill.[7] A Jamaican who was mentioned in Ion Idriess' Forty Fathoms Deep,[8] Gill was a pearl diver at the height of the industry. By the time Doris and Kevin arrived in Broome, Con was an ageing man near the end of his life, as was the pearl shell industry itself.[9] Yet Con is not the star of his own life story. Instead, attention is placed on an unnamed white cockatoo.[10]

Con lived in or near – or spent much of his time in or near – the Continental Hotel.[11] Unmarried, his companion was a cockatoo with a rather large vocabulary, much of it gleaned from drinkers at the Continental. His most memorable phrase, pronounced to anyone who would listen, was "Go to Darwin and starve, ya bastard." Significantly, if a cockatoo had learnt this phrase, it must have been uttered frequently and consistently. Cockatoos are like an analogue tape recorder, but with feathers.

What makes the phrase both evocative and worthy of discussion is that it emerged from Broome. This town is 2,200 kilometres (1,400 miles) from Perth. The capital city of Perth is known as the most isolated in the world.[12] Yet Broome revealed another layer or level of isolation. Residents managed tropical heat, huge tides, irregular transportation, uneven and scarce food supplies, and seasonal tourism and tourists. Currently, the population of Broome is growing, recorded at 12,000 at the last census, but expanding to 45,000 during the tourist season, including the Shinju Matsuri Festival.[13] It is a small, arid and isolated place, with patches of beauty and a diversity in population beyond the scale of many cities. Yet the cockatoo carried a different story: a love of Brome and a deep derision for - and competitiveness with - another small and isolated town: Darwin.

Darwin at the time of the cockatoo's derision was damaged, still recovering from Japanese bombing during the Second World War. It was a place of even fewer women than Broome and suffered from – or ecstatically enjoyed –

an even wilder reputation. From the isolation of Broome, the pejorative labelling of Darwin had bite and must have been common enough for a cockatoo to learn and use.[14]

This article for Fast Capitalism uses this phase to understand third tier cities and the relationship between them. These small urban environments do not have the profile of global cities like New York, London, Tokyo or Cairo, or second-tier cities, like San Francisco, Manchester, Osaka or Alexandria. There is a wide gap in the city imaging literature when attempting to grasp the challenges of these small places. This article explores these cities and towns that are not well known or internationally branded, but are facing structural economic issues worsened after the Global Financial Crisis, and therefore needing to invent new reasons for their existence.

To commence such a study requires a clear presentation of how cities are defined, constituted, develop, decline and build relationships with other urban environments. To clarify and enable this research requires an early discussion of the types, modes and tiers of cities.

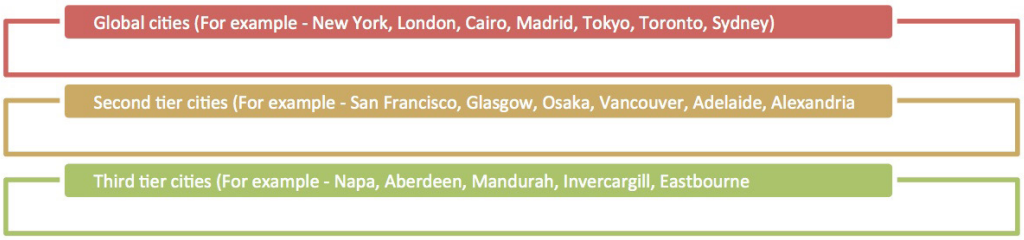

Figure 1: Global, second tier and third tier cities

Cities are defined relationally. So are the relationships between cities and towns. Definitions are dynamic and relational. A city is larger than a town. A town is larger than a village. But the population size, rights and responsibilities that constitute these distinctive markers of urbanity are not transferable between nation states. Number of residents is not a reliable indicator. In Australia, the determination of a 'city' is statistically constituted, being given to a place with a minimum of 10,000-30,000 people. This wide variance in population is necessary as there is a difference between states, with Tasmania at the lower end, and Western Australia at the top of the scale. Reviewing the complexity of systems – for transportation and sanitation for example – is often a better indicator. Some of the historic cities in the United Kingdom are small in terms of population, with towns attracting much larger numbers. In the United States, a 'city' has delegated powers from a state and county, but the population size required to be granted this authority is distinctive to each State. In the New England states – Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island and Connecticut - it is determined by mode of government, rather than population. A town is unincorporated and holds no governmental powers to deliver services. New Zealand maintains distinct and particular characteristics to define and determine a city. It must, "have a minimum population of 50,000, be predominantly urban in character, be a distinct entity and a major centre of activity within the region."[15] Therefore, while a precise and trans-national definition of cities and towns would be advantageous, there are internal distinctions between states and provinces within a nation, and wide variations between nations. There are historical legacies, fortuitous discoveries and random events that have shaped the fortunes of cities and towns. Yet the key strategy of the last decade to manage this diversity is a policy, strategy and portfolio held within the phrase 'creative industries.'

Creative Industries after the Global Financial Crisis

Cities have signified excitement, movement, chaos, political intrigue and opportunity since – at least – the industrial revolution. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels developed the theories for political change while watching the twisting Manchester landscape, bending and buckling under the speed of economic and social change caused by the textile industry. In the century that followed, urbanity was marketed, gentrified and celebrated, displacing the industrial tailings and poor health of the workforce. Since the first set of creative industries policies were instigated by the

Tony Blair government in 1997, economic development and city development have been tethered. Researchers such as Richard Florida,[16] Charles Landry[17] and Charles Leadbeater[18] have aligned progress with urbanity. There is a positive correlation between urbanization and per capital income.[19] Efficiencies in agriculture allow a population to move into cities.[20] Through the history of the creative industries, the challenges and specificities of small, third-tier cities have been under-discussed. Indeed, a series of proxies – such as the presence of a gay community[21] or 'bohemians'[22] – have been the building blocks of a creative city. This has meant that assumptions have dominated the creative industries literature. The most damaging and seductive is the theory of cultural modelling. Researchers suggest that the practices that operate well in San Francisco in the United States or Manchester in England will have a relevance and resonance in Wagga Wagga or Invercargill. Indeed, even the relevance of Manchester's regeneration to Bolton, Blackburn or Morecambe is questionable.

Such assumptions create sloppy thinking. Regeneration has become a bland word or one that defaults to an automatic positive connotation. The examples from the United Kingdom in the late 1990s and 2000s showed that urban regeneration emerged in the context of neoliberalism, when public services and funding were reduced.[23] Regeneration meant – simply – a boost in building construction. Yet the personal and public resolve and planning required to regenerate the lives of residents – through thinking about work, leisure, education and family life – were not conducted. Phil Jones and James Evans presented this process ruthlessly – but with productive bite.

Figure 2. Diagram constructed by Tara Brabazon, based on Phil Jones and James Evans, Urban Regeneration in the UK, (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2008)

After 'urban regeneration,' how is development sustained, particularly if this 'development' only 'improved' the central business district? Buildings and the 'investments' that follow are a mask for deindustrialization, depopulation, environmental damage and decrepit infrastructure.[24]

Perhaps the most important emerging concepts in understanding urbanity are sustainability and resilience.[25] Global cities continue to do well, attracting the money, businesses and well educated population. But this creates deep inequalities and imbalances of wealth.[26] Third tier cities are left with the poor, the less educated, the less mobile and the less skilled.[27] They are places of residuals, waste and deficits. Therefore, the assumption that a neo-liberal model of urban regeneration (constructing buildings) is generalizable to struggling small cities is flawed at best and delusional at worst. This is not only a mode of metrocentricity, it is also global-metrocentricity. As Howell realized, "large populations bring their own amenities and agglomeration effects … making consolidated cities more attractive."[28] While strategies like creative industries are valuable, the generalizability of these strategies should now be deeply questioned, particularly considering the imbalance of research away from third tier cities. Some of this research involves an engagement with troubled and decaying local governments.

The maturity of a council can be ascertained through how they structure the relationship between economic development and culture, creativity, the arts and media. An example of a flawed and dated structure that did not recognize the changing relationship between producers and consumers is Bathurst Regional Council, a small city in inland Australia. Even in the 2010s, they have four departments that structure their activities.

- Corporate Services & Finance
- Engineering Services
- Environmental, Planning & Building Services
- Cultural & Community Services.[29]

Culture and community arts are described as a 'service.' City planning and 'building' is structurally separated

from culture. Conservative and elitist conceptualizations of 'culture' permeate these structures. This council remains locked in older models of economics and culture, derived from the creative arts and cultural policy. The economic potential of popular music, design and sport is unmentioned and unrepresented. On the website, the council does not offer entrepreneurial initiatives or opportunities, using popular culture, to create economic development. The minimal innovative cultural development in Bathurst is a testament to the structural separation of art and commerce.

An alternative way of conducting council business is revealed in Bathurst's near neighbour. Dubbo City Council has configured itself as a growing city with a large catchment area of influence.[30] 'Recreation and culture' is a focus, rather than 'the arts.' Because of this changing nomenclature, they were able to attract a national live event: JJJ's One Night Stand. Held in April 2013, the Council not only welcomed this opportunity and windfall, but also created value-added potential for local businesses.[31] Popular music developed tourism and shopping. Dubbo offers a solid model for creative industries and city imaging. Cultural policy is always economic policy. The changes in economics – globalization, digitization, hyper consumption and increasing interests in intellectual property rights and copyright – are radical reconfigurations in cultural life.[32] While Dubbo has been able to capture events, there are some structural limitations such as a slowness to build creative institutions like theatres. There are limitations in selling a city to and for families. A greater diversity of interest and motivation is required to both sustain and grow a small city. Families are diverse. They transform, and parents will leave if there are not opportunities for social and cultural growth. Alternative modes of social organization include single and divorced men and women, gay partnerships, and trans-generational family units of ageing parents and adult children. The focus on a particular model of 'families' where two parents raise children is not generalizable. It is promotable. It is simple, clean and crisp branding, requiring little innovation or imagination. A recent study – reported widely in the Australian press – listed the most 'family friendly' cities. Perhaps not surprisingly, third tier cities were over-represented in this list.[33] In conservative times, it is easy to perpetuate the narrative of small cities as insular (inward), safe (dull) and dependable (lacking imagination and dynamism). These are "place based social norms"[34] that can have a debilitating effect on the men and women that do not fit within the narrow definitions of love, sex, intimacy and families. These everyday geographies do matter. Innovative councils must welcome a complex palette of interpersonal relationships, rather than build administrative barriers that block the formulation of linkages and alignments that dynamically transform through the life cycle.

Mapping small cities for Fast Capitalism, urban development can also be categorized as fast, slow and still.[35]

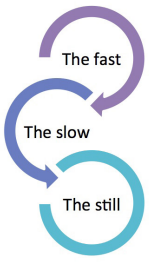

Figure 3. A model of city time, derived from a phrase by G. Duranton, "Urban evolutions: the fast, the slow, and the still," American Economic Review, Vol. 97, No. 1, 2007, pp. 197-221

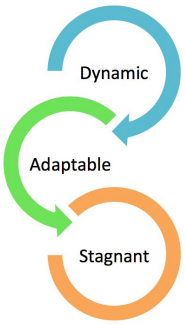

Figure 4. How cities and their citizens manage change

Global cities are associated with speed, movement and change. There is dynamism in managing a changeable context. Second tier cities are more embedded in their histories but can mobilize opportunities if and when they are presented. The Beatles emerged from Liverpool. Beatles tourism grew from the 1980s. The Lord of the Rings film series was managed from Miramar near Wellington in New Zealand. The slower, third tier cities often rely on agricultural rather than industrial time - using seasons - rather than the vagaries of a stock market opening and closing.

Therefore, spaces and times, geographies and histories, the land and the clock, create a momentum for change,

or a blockage to innovation.

Education is important, particularly in these neglected areas and regions. There is a provocative maxim to consider: the smaller the city, the more important the university. While second tier cities have multiple institutions and global cities feature a matrix of further and higher education options, the small cities often feature only one university, or the outlier campus of a larger university. For example Murdoch University in Western Australia has its central campus in the suburb of Murdoch in Perth, but two smaller campuses in Rockingham and Mandurah in the now booming southern corridor of the state. This Peel campus in Mandurah is very small[36] and – most importantly – offers highly restricted courses.[37] Even with these restrictions and limitations, this is still a valuable contribution to a region. John Hogan, the registrar at Newcastle University in the United Kingdom, verified the accuracy of this assumption about universities and small cities.

> Imperial [College London] is a fantastic institution, but if it closed, would London notice? Probably not. But if Newcastle closed, or Northumbria, Durham, Teesside or Sunderland [universities] closed, it would be a catastrophe for the local and the bigger region, because there's not a lot else going on in the North East ... The relative importance of these universities is so much more important than some of the outstanding institutions you might find in London.[38]

This role is increasingly crucial because – as Richard Muir from the Institute for Public Policy Research revealed – regional inequality increases when public spending declines. He suggests that, in the UK context, "£1 million output by a university generated a further £1.38 million for the wider economy."[39] Therefore, in a declining economy, regional injustices heighten, and at such a time, the economic role and significance of a university is amplified.

> The dearth of education in many post-industrial cities helps explain why these places have had such trouble reinventing themselves. They've also suffered because their model of having vast firms in a single industry stunts entrepreneurship and innovation.[40]

This is the double bind. A single industry employed a city's workers, but there were few opportunities to retrain, because of the lack of educational opportunities. That is why universities matter so much, particularly when situated in third tier cities.

What happens to the people who are not 'smart' and 'collaborative,' or flexible in a neoliberal economy? Guy Standing has argued that a new class – the precariat – is being formed.[41] It is an evocative word, capturing a movement from stability and certainty with work and home. It is a life of fracture, fissures and dense instability. This is the group of casualized workers that personally assumed the risk of capitalism. If the business was losing money, then casual staff could be sacked and rehired if required. This is a transfer of risk from employer to employee. The outcome is "temporary career-less workers."[42] Because third tier cities have less complex economic options for alternative employment, the problems of the precariat are particularly severe. Workers – historically – have possessed the 'double freedom' to sell their labour but be 'free' from the means of production.[43] Yet in times of labour surplus, this last freedom dissipates.

After the Global Financial Crisis and rise of the precariat, the assumptions, theories and models of branding and urban regeneration not only appear brittle but corrosive. As Joel Kotkin has argued,

> Among the most pervasive, and arguably pernicious, notions of the past decade has been that the "creative class" of the skilled, educated and hip would remake and revive American cities. The idea, packaged and peddled by consultant Richard Florida, had been that unlike spending public money to court Wall Street fat cats, corporate executives or other traditional elites, paying to appeal to the creative would truly trickle down, generating a widespread urban revival ... Indeed in many ways the Floridian focus on industries like entertainment, software, and social media creates a distorted set of economic priorities. The creatives, after all, generally don't work in factories or warehouses. So why assist these industries? Instead the trend is to declare good-paying blue collar professions a product of the past. [44]

'Cool cities,' such as San Francisco, do not provide methods, strategies, trajectories or scenarios for assisting deindustrialized cities, particularly with an un(der)employed working class. The sleight of hand was that the underemployed, post-skilled working classes in Detroit, Stoke or Newcastle (in Australia) would move from their assembly lines and work in service industries, making coffee, preparing food or selling clothes or mobile phones. This shift did not eventuate.

The Global Financial Crisis was the honest – indeed brutal – mirror that made the followers of Richard Florida - capitalism's Dorian Gray - recognize the flaws in their theories and research. By January 2013, Richard Florida admitted this reality in public.[45] He noted that, "the past couple of decades have seen America sort itself into

two distinct nations, as the more highly skilled and affluent have migrated to a relatively small number of cities and metro areas."[46] He did not hear the Benjamin Disraeli echo in his words,[47] or assess the impact of this 'sorting' on reinforcing inequality.[48] Cities with skilled workers increased their skill. The others suffer and decline as the educated, the skilled, the young and the tax payers leave one location and move to another.

> On close inspection, talent clustering provides little in the way of trickle-down benefits. Its benefits flow disproportionately to more highly-skilled knowledge, professional and creative workers whose higher wages and salaries are more than sufficient to cover more expensive housing in these locations. While less-skilled service and blue-collar workers also earn more money in knowledge-based metros, those gains disappear once their higher housing costs are taken into account.[49]

This reality was masked before the Global Financial Crisis. The surplus capital from finance and real estate could be used for branding, promotion and advertising of other – particularly media - industries. Manufacturing and agricultural industries were neglected, with the focus on universities and the service sector. After the GFC, an array of workers required jobs, stability, security and reliable funding for housing and health. Instead, the precariat emerged.

Like much of the creative industries ideologies, the urban planners and local governments were sold smoke, mirrors and a band aid, all of which proved weak and irrelevant when buffeted by the whiplash of finance capital. Macgillis's critique was not only seething, but personal.

> In April 2006, the Richard Florida show arrived in the Southern Tier of Upstate New York. It was only one of the scores of appearances this decade by the economic-development guru, whose speaking fee soared to $35,000 not long after his 2002 book The Rise of the Creative Class made him a star on the lecture circuit. Cleveland, Toledo, Baltimore, Greensboro, Green Bay, Des Moines, Hartford, Roanoke, and Rochester were among the many cities that had already shelled out to hear from the good-looking urban-studies professor about how to get young professionals to move in ... Of course, none of these burgs has yet completed the transformation from post-manufacturing ugly duckling to gay-friendly, hipster swan. But middling results elsewhere did not keep people in the greater Elmira area from getting excited about Florida's visit. They listened as, in his stylish suit and designer glasses, he related his blue-collar upbringing outside Newark before segueing into his secrets of urban success in the 21st century: the "three T's" of technology, talent, and tolerance. If cities could make themselves appealing to the Web designers, architects, biomedical researchers, and other innovators who are now the drivers of economic growth, then they would also attract the businesses that want these footloose pioneers to work for them.[50]

These 'post-manufacturing' burgs were also small third tier cities. Their manufacturing past was the reason for their foundation, infrastructure and population. But production and consumption remained in industrial models. Regeneration failed. The 'creative class' did not arrive. Neither did tourists. Third tier cities were the canary in the mine. They function at the mono-industrial edge of capitalism, showing the cost of simple solutions – of marketing and branding – to dense, complex and structural economic and social weaknesses.

Because so much of the creative industries neglected manufacturing and agriculture, focusing instead on the service sector, media industries and tourism, it did not take root in small cities. The best use of creative industries involves the deployment of design and skill development to 'value-add' to agricultural products and manufactured goods. A wine industry uses branding and design strategies to provide information about the region in which the grapes are grown.[51] Tourism is enabled and other produce in the area is promoted and supported. There are still large groups of workers around the world who live in and on manufacturing, mining, construction and agriculture. The problem is that Charles Leadbeater's title – Living on thin air[52] – was taken literally. But copyright and intellectual property rights are the start of economic development and a new income stream. They are not the entirety of the economy.

If Florida and the first wave of creative industries researchers were wrong – which they were – then what can be gleaned from the creative industries and city imaging theories after the GFC? There remains real people with real families, housing (particularly mortgage) crises, health crises and transportation crises in third tier cities. They were living in Daniel Bell's post-industrial society.[53] This is not only a question of earning a predictable and stable salary. There is a provocative link between health, wealth and inequality.[54] A 'good life' is difficult to create or measure and requires attention to health and a secure, reliable income.[55] It is imperative that there are educational opportunities to retrain for new opportunities in employment, and participation in community life. How are these to be managed? To answer this question, my next section focuses on the specificities of third tier cities.

Entering the Third Tier: A Tour through Decay and Disadvantage

Third tier cities are not only neglected in the research literature, but lack infrastructural and policy support.[56]

It is difficult for these areas to gain an identity and image. These cities are incredibly diverse in shape, population size and economic 'development.' Erickcek and McKinney located and categorized eight types of small cities:

1. Dominated by an older industry in decline.
2. Private-sector dependent, with little public sector employment
3. Dispersed geography and function
4. Company towns attempting to survive when a company leaves
5. University and college cities where graduates leave after graduation
6. Company towns surviving after the company leaves, but with a remaining social purpose
7. Cities growing through the engine of the new economy and creative industries
8. Cities growing through university/government/business clusters.[57]

This is a strong rubric to map and categorize third tier cities. A key book in this under-researched field that captures this diversity is the edited collection from David Bell and Mark Jayne: Small cities: urban experience beyond the metropolis.[58] The contributors investigate the consequences of inter-city competitiveness. The overarching argument from the researchers is that the strategies that have worked in San Francisco and Manchester are not (necessarily) applicable to Bathurst, Mandurah, Invercargill, Bolton or Oshawa.

Unable to replicate the strategies of second-tier cities like Manchester, Osaka or Seattle and without an intervention from public or private investment or higher education institutions, third-tier cities stagnate or decompose. The question, raised by Beth Siegel and Andy Waxman, is whether this decline is unstoppable.

> Unfortunately for these cities, many of the sources of strength that they drew upon in their heyday are now disadvantages in the New Economy. For example, their rich industrial heritage was the result of large, densely built factories that were constructed to take advantage of the transportation modes of the day – waterways and railroads. In the New Economy, employers prefer an entirely different sort of location – sprawling one-story buildings near highways and advanced telecommunications lines, or in larger, more vibrant cities ... As jobs moved out of these small cities, a host of other problems followed: declining population, loss of the middle class, abandoned mill buildings with environmental legacies, struggling downtowns, a shrinking tax base, and fewer employment opportunities.[59]

Jobs vacate these small cities, along with population. Downtowns struggle. The tax base reduces. The difficulty in retaining young people and attracting new residents is profound. These third tier cities exist throughout the world and the strategies to enable their recovery are diverse. Superficial attention to branding and city imaging are not sufficient. Siegel and Waxman realized that, "while the data demonstrate that third-tier cities are having difficulty transitioning to the New Economy, a more thorough understanding of these cities is needed, an understanding that goes well beyond statistics."[60]

To address Siegal and Waxman's realization, I propose a four-layered strategy for this understanding of small urban environments. Firstly, it is important to grasp the specificity of the city's history, noting the period of its greatest economic and social success, along with its causes, consequences and legacy. A second stage is to recognize the present environment and reality of living in this city, including the social and institutional gaps and challenges. Thirdly, it is beneficial to explore the similarities and differences with other third tier cities around the world, noting effective and inefficient strategies for change. Finally, a city modelling imperative, where applicable strategies in one city are then attempted in another, may provide either a longer-term pathway to growth or a temporary tactic to sustain a current situation while other policies are discovered and researched. Cities are not a "growth machine."[61]

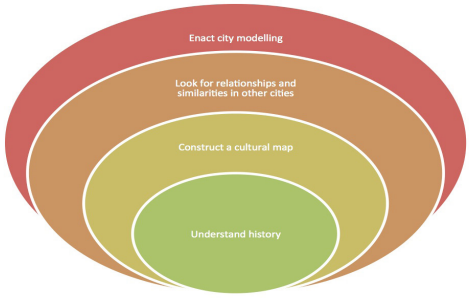

Figure 5. Stages to intervene in third tier city development (Outward development)

Many third tier cities gained a successful single industry in the manufacturing and industrial age. Flint in Michigan and Oshawa in Canada manufactured motor vehicles.[62] Napa (still) makes wine and has flourishing wine-tourism enterprises. Blackpool was a destination for working class tourism. Rockhampton in Australia was a service hub for the cattle industry with a huge meat works.

These cities are rarely known beyond their nation. They are not marketed or branded. So third tier cities were successful in the manufacturing/industrial age, but have failed in the new knowledge economy. The housing and transportation in the third tier is inadequate.[63] The infrastructure was based on factories and the construction of small homes for the workers to service the industry. The telecommunication systems and mobile networks are inadequate. Therefore, the jobs reduce and employment in 'the new economy' – particularly in the service sector, creative industries and education - move to global and second tier cities.[64] Because of the lack of employment, the population is declining, the middle class are leaving, and health and educational facilities are reducing. Abandoned and derelict buildings proliferate. Environmental problems, hazards and pollution result from the after effects of de-industrialization. Downtowns are deserted. Shops close because of the lack of population. Young people leave for global cities where work and leisure opportunities are a draw card. What remains are commuter cities that are often desolate, decomposing and decaying.

The third tier city - although under-researched – offers much to scholars particularly with regard to local culture, theories of economic and social decline and rejuvenation. Unable to replicate the strategies of Melbourne, Vancouver or Manchester, without infrastructural investment, they may stagnant and decompose without careful, incisive and specific policy development. Most gained a purpose and focus through the industrial revolution and Fordism.[65] After post-industrialization, attraction and retention of migrants becomes a concern.[66] But in an environment of creative industries, knowledge economy and Leadbeater's Living on Thin Air,[67] these third tier cities began to lose their purpose.

There are opportunities for these small cities to recover and bloom. Some cities adjust to change. Others do not. Landry presented some reasons for this pattern of success, failure and transformation.

> Successful cities seemed to have some things in common – visionary individuals, creative organizations and a political culture sharing clarity of purpose.[68]

Third tier cities lack these attributes. They lack the policy structures to build relationships between sectors. Art is separated from economics. Certainly, there is no checklist for recovery. There is little evidence that confirms the transferability of strategies between struggling cities.[69] What may work in Dubbo will not function in Hastings. What operates in Margate may not succeed in Invercargill. However outlining these strategies, policies and plans that have worked in a third tier city does offer opportunities and strategies that are rarely available because a lack of research. As David Bell and Mark Jayne realized,

> Small cities have been ignored by urban theorists who, in seeking to conceptualize broad urban agendas and depict generalizable models (for example relating to epochal urbanism, the structure and nature of the urban hierarchy, global cities and global city-regions), have tended to obscure as much as they illuminate. Given that study of 'the city' has been vital to broader advances in the social sciences, this neglect of smaller urban centres has profound consequences for urban studies.[70]

This 'neglect' also has consequences for economic development, managing social inequalities and enabling access to not only the infrastructure but the opportunity to participate in sport and leisure, and to develop healthy individuals and communities. Long commutes sap both life and time. Importantly, many workers live in third tier cities and work in global cities. For example, Eastbourne is an affluent – if uneven – town in the extreme south east of England. It is a 90 minute train trip to London Victoria, with the first train leaving the station at 5:08am.[71] This train is filled with men working in London, alongside a few holidaymakers catching an early flight and disembarking at London Gatwick station. But the impact of three hours of commuting time each day must be recognized in all areas of a person's life. Relationships suffer.[72] Health declines.[73] Political engagement reduces.[74] One key solution to these nagging and corrosive social problems is that third tier cities be economically more robust and resilient, so that individuals, couples and families can live in these small cities and towns, but also work within them. By alleviating the commute, an array of new social and economic relationships can be formed. The key is to create jobs in these places.

When a Place Finds a Purpose

What do a car race, apple blossom festival and an Elvis weekend have in common? The answer is that each of these events creates tourism, profile and economic development in third tier cities in the Central West of New South Wales in Australia. Such strategies combine entrepreneurialism, natural advantages in the landscape and luck. Urban environments, at their best, create a matrix of landscape, economic development and social behaviour. This allows organic and productive relationships to emerge between these variables, creating imaginative, dynamic and innovative patterns in daily life.[75]

The generic policies for the creative industries and city imaging provide the basic framework to consider the changing nature of urbanity. The problem is how to decode, translate and filter these agendas for very distinctive environments and outcomes. I understand these challenges, having worked in small cities in Canada, England and Australia. Currently, I am resident in Bathurst, one of a series of inland cities in New South Wales that arc out from Sydney. This chain of inland cities is unusual, particularly considering that 80% of the Australian population hug the coast. Bathurst is an important site of study for this article. Known for 'the great race'- the Bathurst 1000[76] - it offers both international branding and an economic spike for the city each year. Yet there remains ambivalence from the residents. This event is separate and distinct from the lived experience of this small city.

Bathurst fits the profile of third tier cities and yet maintains an aspiration and trajectory for change. This city was – and is – best known as the home of a day-long motor race. It is an educational hub that houses Charles Sturt University. It (almost) manages the pull towards Sydney,[77] but suffers from a poor transportation infrastructure, particularly with regard to cheap and publically-available facilities. A similar example is Luton in the United Kingdom, which also houses a university (Bedfordshire), but is too close to London to resist its pull, and lacks the specificity of event management. Oshawa in Canada now has a university – the University of Ontario Institute of Technology – but is tethered to the global centre of Toronto. Bolton in the north of England also maintains a university, but it is part of the Lancashire towns that are collapsing into Greater Manchester. Bathurst is internationally unusual because it features one major, internationally-known sporting event.

Universities matter to this analysis, but cannot be a solitary singular engine for development. Often forgotten are the diversity of employment opportunities in a university, and its tethered service industries. While academics are the most visible, a large suite of administrators – from finance to human resources to legal and governance to information technology – are required. Cleaning and hospitality staff are needed, alongside an array of shops and services to keep this large organization in food, clothing and an array of services such as banking, stationery, security, software, hardware and books. Universities – in and of themselves – are complex organizations. That is why they matter in third tier cities, which were often mono-industrial in their formation. Rendering such spaces, economies and populations complex is a challenge. But universities are a strong first step in enabling this diversity.

Nicos Komninos developed the phrase "intelligent cities."[78] This concept builds on the configurations of learning regions and organizational learning to develop "regional systems of innovation."[79] Attendant to such systems is an understanding of the actors in this system, how they interact, and the technology available to create competitive strengths over other regions. When extended, an "intelligent city" emerges, integrating individual, collective and artificial intelligence in a specific setting.[80] The goal is to create innovation through social cooperation.[81] While Komninos does not mention the role of schools and universities in such a scheme, online learning offers an extraordinary opportunity to collaborate, innovate and disseminate, serving to brand and market the university in the process.

For third tier cities, event management is the key. They cannot dominate space, but they can dominate a (short) period of time in their region, and perhaps nation. The key challenge is to mobilize event management to improve the life of residents in the city. Greg Richards and Robert Palmer confirmed that events can "help 'make' places."[82] They show how events can render cities more liveable and how they can be the carrier for wider social, economic and cultural objectives.[83] Their key examples are from the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) programme that has been held since 1985. Their research – published after the Global Financial Crisis – captured the stark nature of choices available for cities.

Cities of today face two choices. Either they develop to meet the challenges created by the pace of global change, or they resist the impulse for transformation and stagnate. At a time when economic systems are no longer predictable, in order to remain competitive, cities are turning to strategies that focus on their own innate resources – their histories, spaces, creative energy and talents.[84]

This is particularly poignant considering the infrastructural neglect of most third tier cities. The small city is confronting challenges, but the marketing (or at least the definition) of 'creative energy' is necessary. While the meaning of such a phase is ambiguous, it is obvious that for certain regions, they need (desperately) Richard Florida and the creative industries / city imaging discourse to hold at least some truth: "The new centrality of culture in urban policy was linked to a series of externalities, such as the need to stimulate economic growth, the need to bolster social inclusion and the changing urban landscape."[85] Within such a statement, the marketing of culture becomes the economic strategy of last resort. When the city becomes a stage, infrastructure becomes a prop.

Events such as festivals are crucial to third tier cities. Their success is reliant on transforming a concept, historical accident or imaginative idea into a practical application and outcome. It is a movement from ideas into experiences. Put another way, this is the movement from city marketing to city branding.[86] Global and second tier cities dominate film festivals (Toronto, Cannes, Venice and Berlin). But food offers enormous potential for third tier cities – particularly when they are the gateway or hub for agricultural regions. A fine example from Halifax is 'Catch,' the Nova Scotia Seafood Festival.[87]

Creative industries and city imaging policies, strategies and agendas will look different in these places. But they will claim a moment in time, rather than a generic branding or marketing strategy. Budgets will be small. Goals – which may become key performance indicators – will be conservative, long-term and difficult to measure. Part of the challenge to address is neglect. The dominance of finance capitalism in global cities – alongside the boom in 'lifestyle' capitalism in second tier cities – means that third tier cities and towns are decentred, marginalized, denied and forgotten. Therefore the 'brand' of these cities has never been addressed directly. It is difficult to start this process now because of the hyper-availability of information via the read-write web that discredits and undermines the life of those living in these places.

There are ten questions that may assist policy makers, small and medium sized businesses and public sector enterprises when considering how to develop, enhance, sustain and grow third tier cities.

1. Is the city or town invisible beyond hyper-local affiliations? Consider strategies for event management to build national and international profile.
2. Is primary production, mobile goods or digitally-delivered materials key areas of economic development? Consider the development of an integrated, place-specific, social media campaign. Geosocial networking may also be an option.
3. What are the costs and benefits of marketing the city or town as 'family friendly'? Are there facilities and opportunities to experience a good life for single people, couples and multiple ages?
4. Does the city have a university resident within it? Is this institution being used effectively? Are academics deployed by councils and community organizations for their expertise? Are the possibilities for life-long learning promoted for the residents?
5. Are health and fitness facilities available for residents of multiple ages and abilities? If weather is not temperate, are indoor facilities available?
6. Is plentiful, fresh and high quality food available to residents? Are there a diversity of supermarkets and primary producers to provide alternatives to fast food outlets?
7. Is the city walkable? What strategies – such as geosocial networking – can be deployed to increase the interest in moving through the city?
8. Are both high and popular culture supported in the city? Can bands be formed and play and DJs perform at local events, as much as ensembles and orchestras?
9. Evaluate the local government departments and structures. Are entrepreneurial opportunities enabled, or is there a structural separation of economic and cultural development?
10. How effective is the transportation network? If there is an airport, how regular and reliable are the flights moving to global and second tier cities? How regular are trains that not only connect to global cities, but link small cities and towns?

This article has probed, framed and explored how smaller cities are managed, transformed or left to decline. In reality, cities matter because the lives, hopes, aspirations and goals of so many people are reliant on the availability of work, safe and clean food, enjoyable leisure and exercise, transportation and the capacity to build a network of friends, acquaintances and relationships. The goal is to create – as Mitchell, Frank, Harris, Dodds and Danforth have described - "the geography of happiness."[88] Half the world's population live in urbanity. In reality, we must discuss urbanities. Creative cities – of coffee shops, tasteful electronic music and polo shirts – are not the archetype that Richard Florida proposed. Education cities, which may be smaller and less dynamic but earnestly committed to teaching, learning, reading and thinking, may also be valued. Many of these cities are small and stable but with a rhythm punctuated by reading and thinking, rather than talking and espresso. Others may value high quality food, sport and walkability. They create great pride, because they offer a deep belonging. This pride can result in the story

that started this article, about a white cockatoo that had been taught by Broome residents who loved their location so much, that all other competing places were only worthy of humour and ridicule. There is an edgy joy in Con's cockatoo reminding listeners – if they dislike Broome – to "go to Darwin and starve, ya bastard."

Walter Benjamin described Paris as the "capital of the 19th century."[89] This phrase is evocative, because he demonstrates how global cities not only occupy space, but time. Similarly – and following on from Benjamin – New York was the capital of the 20th century. That is why the destruction of the World Trade Centre's Twin Towers on September 11, 2001 was so provocative, shocking, startling but disturbingly symbolic. The New York century was over. The capital of the 21st century is yet to emerge. Beijing or Mumbai are both contenders. Third tier cities will never dominate their space or time. But the residents within them can live local lives of resilience, sustainability, accountability, responsiveness and responsibility. These cities and towns can dominate a few seconds on the national and – perhaps – international clock through a sporting event, a quirky festival or a tragic event. Bathurst, Glastonbury and Lockerbie remain provocative examples of these three categories. They are thrust into the light through sport, music or calamity. Yet for the men, women and children who live a life 'hiding in the light,'[90] there is an opportunity to summon a new way of living, learning, earning and thinking.

Endnotes

1. Henry Reynolds explores these alternative, often genocidal histories in An indelible stain?, (Ringwood: Viking, 2001)

2. Although recorded later, the ABC current affairs programme 4 Corners went to Broome at the moment it was transitioning from its primary industry: sourcing mother of pearl before the arrival of plastics, which destroyed the market. Please refer to "4Corners in Broome 1962," ABC, http://www.abc.net.au/local/videos/2010/12/02/3083134.htm

3. Two language groups lived in the Broome region: the Yawuru and Jungun. By 2006, the Yawuru gained Native Title for the area around Broome. This region was approximately 5000sq km.

4. This dedication and commitment to the land remains. Please refer to "Bardi Jawi," Department of the Environment, Government of Australia, http://www.environment.gov.au/indigenous/ipa/declared/bardijawi.html

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6. A fascinating recent article captured the intimate nature of some of these relationships. Please refer to R. Balint, "Aboriginal Women and Asian Men: A Maritime History of Color in White Australia," Signs, Vol. 37, No. 3, Spring 2012, pp. 544-554

7. Con Gill – along with his 'parrot' - is mentioned as a 'colourful personality' in a family history "Adams and Associated Families in Australia 1830-2013," http://members.iinet.net.au/~nbradley/Adams-o/p14.htm

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9. It was to be replaced with a still-thriving cultured pearl industry that is very successful because of Broome's king tides. Please refer to "Australia's Pearling Industry," Australia.gov.au, http://australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/australias-pearling-industry

10. As cockatoos (often called umbrella cockatoos) can live over fifty years, Con and his cocky may indeed have spent much of their adult lives together. It is believed Con Gill died in 1955.

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12. The corrective is often that Perth is the most isolated continental capital city in the world. Honolulu is actually more isolated from neighbouring cities. Please refer to Life on Perth, http://www.lifeonperth.com/facts.htm

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to Darwin, it was necessary to discover and deploy locations that still sustained some historical features. For a discussion of the film Australia, please refer to Fiona Lake, http://www.fionalake.com.au/other-info/other-references/music-films-books/australia-film-story#set

15. "City," New Zealand Government, 2006, http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/about-2006-census/2006-census-definitions-questionnaires/definitions/c.aspx

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20. G. Michaels, F. Rauch and S. Redding," Urbanization and structural transformation," Quarterly Journal of Economics, Vol. 127, No. 2, 2012, pp. 535-586

21. The relationship configured between the presence of gay men and women and the development of creative industries is one of the oddest proxies configured by Florida and his colleagues. In many ways, it is inverted, backwardly mapped research. San Francisco is 'gay friendly' and the place of small and creative startups. There is not necessarily – or indeed actually – any relationship between these variables. However there is research that probes the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer citizens in small cities. A fascinating study that probes the metrocentric nature of gay narratives is Tiffany Muller Myrdahl, "Ordinary (small) cities and LGBQ lives," ACME, Vol. 12, No. 2, 279-304

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All Quiet on the Neoliberal Front? A Reconsideration of Habermas's Legitimation Crisis

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Introduction

This paper explores why capitalism, while certainly in the throes of a systemic crisis of advanced industrial allocation precipitated by financial tumult, is not in the midst of a corresponding crisis of legitimation. I proceed from the assumption that one can currently diagnose several economic and political crisis – mainly the Great Recession since 2008 and the European sovereign debt crisis since 2010. Furthermore, it appears that movements such as Occupy do indeed question the normative foundations of capitalism in these crises. I aim to explore reasons, then, for the peculiar constellation that this combination of objective crisis conditions and corresponding normative critique does not result in widespread crises of the legitimation of capitalist economies and market-guaranteeing nation-states.

Thus, the paper positions itself within the space of a question posed by a variety of contemporary observers. There is a widespread unease among professional social critics regarding the virtues of an economic system that, in Joseph Stiglitz's words, "is seen to fail for most citizens" (Stiglitz 2006: XII) and that consequently seems to make it a necessity to question both its efficiency and its moral foundations (ibid.: XI and XIII). Similar arguments abound in the recent literature (cf., for example, Skidelsky 2010; Rodrik 2011; Harvey 2011; Fraser 2012). Habermas's (2011) own work on the crisis of the European Union and even the European project under conditions of economic crisis is a case in point. It appears abundantly clear that the current socio-economic configuration of financial capitalism is in a crisis of economic performance. This crisis manifests itself not only on the demand side, where U.S. and European consumption remains threatened by wide margins of inequality and a corresponding lack of effective demand (cf., for the U.S., Galbraith 2012: 293; for Europe: Shambaugh 2012: 169). The supply side of U.S. and European economies is likewise affected by credit conditions which, despite five years having passed since the outbreak of the Subprime Crisis, still remain fragile (for Europe, this is analyzed in Shambaugh 2012; for the U.S., in Reinhart and Rogoff 2012). In addition to this, some have argued for social movements like the Alterglobalization movement or Occupy to be interpreted as a Habermasian project of reengaging a legitimation crisis (see, for example, Bornstein 2009: 102 sq.). Yet, despite these criticisms, neither the global financial economy, nor its national varieties in Europe or the United States, nor even the underlying exploitative relations they project and sustain, are subject to widespread public normative questioning. In his most recent work, Philip Mirowski (2013) notes this as well: while the economic system seemed to be in shambles in 2008 and 2009, and its most stalwart defenders had either turned into humble apologetics of state intervention, or seemed to be brushed to the wayside if they continued to toot the horn of economic orthodoxy, the presumption that it was high time to pit new ideas against old ones, and sustain the normative critique of global financialized capitalism until its legitimation evaporated, "was itself just one more insidious hallucination" (Mirowksi 2013: 1).

My focus differs from Mirowski in that I explicitly address not the role of economic discourse in engendering and exacerbating the crisis, but rather its opposing discourse: possible sources of its normative questioning (or the

absence thereof). To this end, I introduce an analysis based on Jürgen Habermas's Legitimation Crisis (1975). Thus, I argue for a theoretical perspective departing, first, from Jürgen Habermas's assumption that the legitimation of any social set of institutions is necessary for the continuous survival of these institutions. In Legitimation Crisis itself, Habermas applied this perspective to a historically specific combination of capitalist markets and market-guaranteeing, but also welfare-oriented nation-states which had since been replaced with a different, financialized configuration. As I will show in this paper, however, Habermas's argument is embedded in a more systematic perspective which sheds light on why the legitimation of any such configuration of capitalist markets and market-guaranteeing nation-states is threatened by their underperformance under conditions of economic crises. The origin of the possibility of this transposition of economic crises of performance to normative crises of legitimation of capitalism, for Habermas, is the dual nature of all social interaction, which is at once aligned by non-normative mediations (through money, laws, power, etc.) and open to intersubjective scrutiny. Embedding this latter element in a historical trajectory leading from the crisis patterns of the 1970s, through the neoliberal project – defined here, with Harvey (2005), as the totality of political, social, and economic measures encompassing, among others, deregulation of financial markets, reorganization of labor patterns toward flexibility and precarious employment, the reorganization of states towards authoritarian free-market pseudo-democracies, the abolition of welfare measures, etc. – allows, I argue, a diagnosis of the origins of today's absence of widespread normative questioning of capitalism.

Thus, invoking Habermas's categories is not merely an exegetical endeavor in updating his theory. Rather, using Habermas's theory as a starting point for the analysis of the conditions which make a transposition of economic-functional crises into political-normative crises allows to trace changes these conditions of possibility have undergone since Habermas's writing. As mentioned above, one can diagnose the objective persistence of several economic crises of (potentially) global ramifications, along with the existence of movements questioning the normative foundations of the economic system in crisis. The latter suggests, as I will argue, that claims of a suppression of the politicality of the current economic crises by media discourses are misguided. Rather, I maintain that the neoliberal project has severely threatened the ability of subjects in Western capitalist societies to withdraw their normative support to, and hence engender a legitimation crisis of the capitalist system in its current form.

In the second and third sections of this paper, I engage Habermas's theoretical framework and its central argument – the opposition between a lifeworld as a reservoir for normative judgments on the one hand, and systemic dynamics continually working to emancipate themselves from this normative reservoir and the judgments it engenders, on the other. Despite Habermas's crisis theory being contained mainly in his Legitimation Crisis, it is useful to approach the central concepts explaining the origin of legitimation, both as a normative question and as a systemic resource, based on what Habermas himself identified as their more systematic exposition in the Theory of Communicative Action (1989: 344). This will allow an exploration, in section four, as to possible reasons for its inapplicability to contemporary economic crisis conditions.

System and Lifeworld

Crises of economic performance appear to be a necessary part of the cycles of capitalist accumulation. For David Harvey (2011: 11), economic crises are necessary occurrences in the processes of capitalist accumulation because they serve to rationalize over- and undershoots of economic allocation. This process itself, however, is irrational and includes the squandering of productive capacities and livelihoods. Thus, as Stiglitz (2006: XII) points out, this rationalization of productive and pricing processes by way of economic crisis is normatively highly questionable: the simultaneous existence of empty homes and homeless people in the Great Recession, for example, certainly seems to be problematic.

It is this normative questioning that Habermas argued for. The structure of Stiglitz's argument – an argument that can be found in numerous other recent works, such as Minsky (2008) as well – poses the question of a capitalist system that appears to have emancipated its social dynamic from moral and normative foundations. As pointed out in the introduction, Habermas's theoretical framework would appear to allow for the continued possibility of normative critique despite these anti-normative dynamics.

According to Habermas, every social institution is perceived from two different angles by subjects relating to these institutions. As Stephen White (1980: 1008) explains, these perceptions always contain a normative component. This component's central stake is a normative deliberation among subjects regarding the legitimacy of the social

institutions they come to be governed by. A normative deliberation of this kind is possible, according to White's explication of Habermas's theory, because it takes place in a "discourse [which] is freed from formal constraints on the process of argumentation itself, as well as constraints which are brought into that process from the surrounding context of interaction" (ibid.: 1009). Such constraints are the second angle, then: functional dynamics draining subject's interactions of normative potential by imposing on it the very forms of communicative rationalities prescribed by the institutions to be assessed. If a communicative interaction between subjects is modulated by such contextual constraints, these subjects act according to the systemic aspect of the communicative interaction. If it is not, normative judgments are possible: subjects view the interaction from the perspective of a lifeworld (Habermas 1989: 118).

The first element of this theory to be considered is its ontology. Institutions, for Habermas, consist of social interactions which are aligned by way of systemic dynamics. They therefore arise out of specific social regions Habermas (1989: 150) calls "subsystems," but need not be thoroughly associated with them: an institution like a company arises out of the economic subsystem, insofar as its profit-maximizing goal is concerned, but it can also be seen from a legal perspective or, normatively, from a political perspective. Thus, every institution can analytically be resolved into distinct interactions, which, in turn, contain subjects aligned according to the systemic medium the interaction is aligned by, as well as normative judgments by these subjects, but independent of systemic media. Habermas (ibid.: 117) calls such socially aligned situational subjectivities "action orientations."

Secondly, however, it is imperative to understand how subsystemic constraints operate and of what they are constraints. Subsystems are social regions organized by mediations: they consist of communicative routines governing human interactions (Habermas 1989: 154). Thus, in each interaction, a subject is constituted by the communicative position it occupies. For example, if a subject actualizes the juridical subsystem, she will interpret her surroundings according to the parameters of coding reality in terms of lawful/unlawful (as well as other, perhaps more nuanced oppositions). Likewise, in an interaction mediated by the economic subsystem, a subject will assume a position structured by the institutional routines of wage labor, coding her reality in terms of monetary or status gains and losses. In everyday interactions of this kind, therefore, subjects are not their full selves, but face each other as functionally delineated subjectivities. These subjectivities are rational within the constraints of their alignment with whatever social subsystemic imperatives they embody in any given situation (ibid.: 182). From this perspective, therefore, society consists of functionally differentiated regions in which citizens are constituted as subjects according to the functions they fulfill in an institutional architecture.

Habermas gives several specific examples in Legitimation Crisis. He identifies the economic system – capitalist in its structures, aligned according to individual profit motives (1975: 34) and class structures (ibid.: 37 sq.) – the administrative system, trying to maintain the macroeconomic environment of the former (ibid.: 34); the legitimation system maintaining the "basic bourgeois ideology of fair exchange," meritocracy and economic growth (ibid.: 36); and finally a sociocultural system in which the three aforementioned systems are represented to society as a whole (ibid.: 48). In each of these systems, actors actualize specific action orientations (the individual profit motive or the incentive of wage labor in the economic system, for example), and their individual actions are aligned according to specific steering media (money, law) with specific outcomes.

In any given situation, therefore, systemic imperatives work through "a nonnormative regulation of individual decisions that extends beyond the actors' consciousnesses" (Habermas 1989: 117). That is, a subject's actions and their outcomes are aligned by structuring perceptions of situations according to the medium of whatever subsystem the subjects find themselves actualizing.

However, for every participant in any given situation, another perspective is possible: "the teleological aspect of realizing one's aims (or carrying out one's plan of action)" can be distinguished from "the communicative aspect of interpreting a situation and arriving at some agreement" (Habermas 1989: 126). The result of the former aspect of a subject's action orientation is success according to the subsystemic imperative; the result of the latter is a consensus evaluating the interaction according to normative standards (ibid.: 127). However, emphasis must be put here on the dissimilarity of the systemic and the lifeworld orientation of these participants. Interactions, when aligned by a systemic medium (money, or legal technique), are structured to arrive at a purely functional goal which is predetermined by the medium of interaction (ibid.: 150). Thus, the ends of the interaction are given, and the interaction itself is subject to a means-ends-rationality. An example for this are capitalist market transactions, subject to monetarily mediated maximization motives. However, each participant in a capitalist market transaction also has the capacity, at any point, to assess the monetary medium of the interaction the participant finds herself in based

on a questioning of the ends the medium prescribes. This allows the possibility to change the medium of successful interaction: any sale can be turned into a gift at any point.

Thus, in every interaction, there is always a possible perspective on the interaction which is radically dissimilar to its functional means-ends alignment (Habermas 1989: 150). The gift in this example, however, is not a different medium (leading, with Bourdieu, from a market transaction to a symbolic economy), but a possibility contained within the market exchange itself. As Habermas argues, the success- or goal-oriented actions of subjects acting in the context of their subsystemic imperatives are open to scrutiny based on the normative assessment of situations by these subjects in the same situation. The assessment can be negative or positive – the market exchange can be endorsed or criticized – but in any given situation, there will be a normative standard applied to it which is dissimilar to the situation itself. Habermas (ibid.: 137) argues that the normative standards played out in such assessments are derived from the intersubjectively achieved by the communicative consensus of the participants in a situation. Any subjectivity or action orientation of a social subsystem must justify itself normatively against this communicative consensus. What enables this justification, and by the same token what makes it necessary, is the lifeworld. The lifeworld perspective is the implicit horizon accompanying the act with which a subject positions herself in a communicative interaction (ibid.: 135). Thus, a subject may position herself as a wage worker, while simultaneously questioning that same position based on her normative reflections, contained in and derived from her subjective horizon: her lifeworld.

In any everyday situation where communicative interaction takes place, "the lifeworld appears as a reservoir of taken-for-granted, of unshaken convictions that participants in communication draw upon in cooperative processes of interpretation" (Habermas 1989: 124). Thus, according to Habermas, all social interactions, even those which are organized according to systemic media like money, are rooted in subjects' lifeworlds. Lifeworlds are intersubjective and diverse, however; they form the cultural, political, and broader social background for any given interpretation of any given social situation by a subject in this situation (ibid.: 131). For any of these interactions, then, a subject is free to juxtapose different and varying interpretations: it may engage in a market transaction endorsing the goals and media used in such a situation; it may do so without endorsing them; or it may abstain from using the monetary medium and turn the transaction into a gift. Thus, even when the subject engages in the market exchange, the possibility of turning it into a different type of interaction is always present because the subject is capable of juxtaposing different interpretations of the situation, and hence change both its individual action orientation and the socially aligned outcomes (ibid.: 120, cf. ibid.: 180). Nevertheless, the juxtaposition of different normative backgrounds by subjects, according to Habermas, is not licentious: it remains within the normative horizon of the society in question at any given time (ibid.: 119). Consequently, it is possible that the horizon of a society closes into the point that communicative strategies based on systemic media dominate normative assessments; a society can become pre-Modern, or capitalist.

Participants in a social situation constantly evaluate the normative content of the situation together with their fellow participants based on their reservoir of previous experiences, previous normative judgments, and accumulated normative convictions (Habermas 1989: 140). The irreducible crux of this argument, as said above, is the radical dissimilarity of lifeworld and systemic perspective. What is the condition of possibility for this radical dissimilarity?

It has been said above that the normative assessment of a situation is made possible by a communicative excess inherent in each situation insofar as it allows subjects to freely juxtapose their interpretations of the situation at hand. To the extent that this ability to juxtapose is not licentious, but oriented towards an intersubjective horizon of consensus, two possible origins arise. On the one hand, Habermas argues that the language spoken when normatively assessing social facts is different from that aligned with systemic mediation: it alone is a transparent, horizontal, and fully democratic form of communication (cf. Habermas 1989: 140 sq.). The possibility of such a form of communication has long been disputed (cf., for example, Lyotard 1984: 65 sq.). This does not jeopardize Habermas's argument, however, since the dissimilarity of normative assessments with other communicative interactions does not stem from a structurally separated lifeworld perspective. Rather, the perspective is contained in a situation, but excessive relative to its systemically aligned strategies: while normative assessments as such are always intersubjective, and thus their existence is dependent on the possibility of transparent communication (Habermas 1989: 124), the lifeworld of each participant is not itself a subsystem and thus not dependent on a specific form of linguistic mediation. Rather, it is the site in which each subsystemic mediation comes to be transformed into meaningful action – and therefore also the site in which social meaning exceeds the mere execution of the subsystemic imperative (ibid.: 133).

Therefore, the second element constituting the possibility of a lifeworld orientation radically dissimilar to systemic orientations is its status as a background informing normative judgments: it is, as Habermas argues, a "taken-for-granted background" that always remains below "the threshold to basically criticizable convictions" (Habermas 1989: 131). While a subject assumes a position in a systemically mediated social interaction consciously, and thus more or less consciously plays a role, the lifeworld remains an ever-present potential, a remainder or excess beyond any given situation that, if actualized in speech acts, allows the normative scrutiny of the situation.

Hence, Habermas argues that individuals interact with one another as doubly mediated subjectivities. On the one hand, they are constituted by the subsystemic functions as which they face one another. On the other hand, outside of their functions, subjects individually and collectively question the legitimation of these functions and the subsystems they stem from. Both of these facets of everyday subjectivity are rooted in the subject's lifeworld. Because that is the case, the latter encompasses the former at all times. Consequently, in an ideal social environment, all systemic orientations would constantly be under scrutiny, and would be adjusted as the communicative consensus of the citizens' lifeworld would demand (Habermas 1989: 137). This is not the case, however. Under conditions of social normality as defined by the society's subsystems – especially the economic one – normative questioning on a total social scale is, as Habermas points out, exclusively a paid profession (ibid.: 155). Under conditions of crisis, nonetheless, one would – and Habermas does – expect a spread of normative unease from the ivory towers of professional critique to the lifeworlds of average citizens. Thus, it is necessary to see how the transposition of systemic and lifeworld perspectives plays out when the systemic alignments of subjects, and especially the alignment derived from imperatives of capitalist accumulation, starts to fail.

Crisis: Systemic Underperformance, Normative Potential

Given the duality of systemic and lifeworld perspectives on any social interaction, it is not surprising that the central point of Habermas's argument in Legitimation Crisis is the transposition from the objectively problematic character of social conditions – empty homes and homeless people – to their normative problematization – the moral or political assessment of the housing market. From the perspective of the capitalist market subsystem, the coexistence of empty homes and homeless people is a mere fact. Neither the monetary medium nor the profit-maximizing goal of capitalist market interactions allow a normative judgment of empty homes and homeless people in their coexistence. To arrive at a normative judgment, then, intersubjective questioning must intervene.

The fundamental type of crisis in advanced industrial societies, according to Habermas (1975: 45), is the economic crisis. Given that, as outlined above, all social phenomena have systemic and normative dimensions in Habermas's framework, it should be expected that such systemic crises of economic performance are intimately related to normative scrutiny of the economic system which made them possible: crises of legitimation and motivation, economic crises, and crises of rationality (ibid.: 45 sq.).

For Habermas, an economic crisis can occur, first, as a crisis internal to the monetary medium, resulting from the tendency of the rate of profit to fall – i.e., the contradiction between the social character of capitalist accumulation and the private character of the appropriation of its benefits (Habermas 1975: 51 sq.). Secondly and related, it can manifest a form of class struggle, when the payment of low wages clashes with the necessity of effective demand (ibid.: 57). The state, Habermas argues, has to sustain the irrational structure of private allocations of public surplus and public infrastructure investments without ultimately threatening the private mode of accumulation that created the misallocations in the first place (ibid.: 52 sqq.). This leads to crises of rationality in its steering capacities and outcomes.

More importantly, crises of this kind put pressure on the state for sustaining the capitalist system under the conditions of the increasing public realization that it violates its own supposedly universal ethical standards (Habermas 1975: 59). The more pressure the economic subsystem puts on the state to serve its fundamentally irrational capitalist allocation structures, the more problematic it gets for the state to sustain its own legitimation (ibid.: 48). One would expect that this holds especially in a time when states bail out banks while ignoring the poverty of an increasing part of their citizenry (Stiglitz 2006: 251). However the state's legitimation crisis remains subsequent and secondary to the underlying crisis of economic (ir)rationality.

Since Habermas's ontology of institutions identifies them as communicative acts of systemically mediated subjects (1989: 150), a legitimation crisis of a social subsystem induces a motivation crisis on the individual level (Habermas

1975: 76). For subjects constituted as economic individuals, capitalism's behavior of violating the ideological fictions of meritocratic allocation as well as their expectations of either equitably distributed or quantitatively growing outcomes (or both) increasingly jeopardize their allegiance to the wage labor system (ibid.: 75). Since this lack of individual motivation results, for Habermas, from an intersubjective normative assessment of capitalist institutions, it should translate to a collective lack of support for said institutions seamlessly. As Douglas Kellner (1992: 198) points out, Habermas argues that "the system must provide legitimation and motivation in order to continue functioning," because a crisis of legitimation and motivation may lead to individuals "calling into question at least some aspects of the capitalist system and instigating a demand for social transformation" (ibid.: 199).

The transposition of capitalism's crises to the total systemic crises that Habermas argues for (1975: 3) is exacerbated by the specific conditions under which the crisis phenomenon occurs. The social differentiation of Modernity, leading away from a domination by the more or less unquestioned authority of the religious subsystem, makes individuals' allegiance to capitalist societies increasingly dependent on the performance of the capitalist system, rather than a transcendent standard (Habermas 1989: 169). In the development towards Modernity's rationality, the lifeworld's excess over systemic imperatives which allowed the normative questioning of the latter is no longer rooted in a separate faith-based subsystem, but is now derived from the subject's communicative intersubjectivity (ibid.: 142-145). Thus, economic crises and misallocations have palpable social ramifications against which capitalism must justify its continued existence before the court of public opinion (Habermas 1975: 10).

The cultural subsystem can respond to this with two possible justifications. On the one hand, it can attempt to legitimize the capitalist mode of production by highlighting its actual or potential growth. Such attempts are repeated in almost every crisis. Arguments of the form of 'you never had it so good,' however, are neither new nor very effective against the backdrop that the current capitalist economy has only grown substantially in one sector – credit and financialization – since the late 1970s (Galbraith 2012: 148). This growth has not spread to other sectors of the U.S. (or European) economies (ibid.: 144); and it has furthermore been restricted to the top few percent of either economy (Stiglitz 2006: 67). Growth can therefore hardly be a successful strategy of justifying capitalism in the face of recent crises. Since crises, as Habermas (1975: 30) argues, function as "practical critique of the ideology" of growth theorems, capitalist exchange relations must be legitimated by means of the fiction of just exchange relations. However, this fiction can scarcely be upheld (among a wealth of literature supporting this claim, see Stiglitz 2006; Rodrik 2011; or Galbraith 2012).

One may conclude: while in late capitalist societies, legitimation can conceivably be delivered by cultural sectors of society (adding stability), but, more importantly, it must be delivered (adding crisis potential). If legitimation is missing, a crisis of capitalism may become so severe that its entire social and institutional edifice comes under scrutiny (Kellner 2012: 56).

Obviously, the question of a socio-economic system's legitimation only arises when that system is structured democratically, i.e., with a reasonable amount of possible public questioning and discussion. Thus, even a merely formally open democracy allowing a formal freedom of speech, which several of the advanced industrialized democracies currently appear to approach (Luke 2012: 31), ideally puts additional pressure on systemic imperatives to justify themselves (Habermas 1975: 36). The operative word, however, appears to be ideally, given the framing power of media and their consequent ability to persuade the public that there is not, in fact, a lack of legitimation of capitalism and/or its state system even when (especially when) there should be according to Habermas's model.

Thus, as Habermas (1975: 4) argues, a crisis does not occur every time a social shift takes place. Objective social problems also have to be subjectively perceived as such: as structurally problematic to the objective sustenance of, and subjective social identity within, the total socio-economic system. This suggests the necessity of media and otherwise mediated discourses to make citizens aware of structurally problematic developments (ibid.: 37). The role of critical media would then be to allow intersubjective normative assessments by providing the necessary resources for lifeworlds to connect. Were one to argue, therefore, that the normative excess contained in the lifeworld perspective still persists, this would be an opportune place for a media critique. This is the argument Habermas himself makes. Habermas's "structurally depoliticized public realm" (ibid.: 37), could then be seen as a precursor to the current depoliticized media environment (cf. Brown 2005: 48). The next step in this argument would be to note that the transposition of economic systemic crises to normative legitimation crises is obstructed all too effectively by contemporary Western media (Luke 2012: 22; for Germany, this has been argued by Habermas 2012: 136). Examples include the proliferation of right-wing political obstructionism in the United States (Fraser 2012: 168), the silencing of Occupy by all means (cf., for example, Nagourney 2012), or the all-too-willing suppression of economists who

might suggest that the current short-term solutions used in the European Sovereign Debt Crisis might not be altogether desirable (such as Paul Krugman).

This argument, however, is not that of this paper. On the contrary: such media criticism still suggests that a form of public accountability could possibly persist, were the media system structured differently (cf. Luke 2012: 22). Outlets like 'Democracy Now!' would then serve as examples for attempts to tap into some kind of resource for resistance politics. The simultaneous diagnosis of an existence of such programs and widespread political passivity or even complacency does not fit well with this kind of media criticism. One must therefore take a closer look: the problem seems to affect more than just the surface of contemporary media.

Neoliberalism

To show this, consider for example the application of the Habermasian (1975: 2) conception of an economic crisis to the European Sovereign Debt Crisis:"[C]rises arise when the structure of a social system allows fewer possibilities for problem solving than are necessary for the continued existence of the system." On a global scale, it has been argued several times that curbing financial flows is necessary for a sustainable growth of industrial production circuits (cf. LiPuma and Lee 2004; Rodrik 2011). That states appear to be unable to follow this advice, in turn, has been identified as a collective action problem in the absence of an international hegemon – ironically, deregulation has been identified by those who advance this criticism as the last hegemonic act of the United States, which was strong enough for deregulation, but not for re-regulation (Cerny 1994: 241; cf. Arrighi 2012). In Europe, likewise, problems posed by the international embeddedness of European sovereign debt (Lane 2012: 50) appear to be hardly solvable in an institutional structure that oscillates between technocratic non-deliberation (Habermas 2012: IX) and attempts at consensus politics often stifled by the interests either of the City of London (Shipman 2012) or national(ist) political constraints (Weisenthal 2011).

In other words, the European sovereign debt crisis should have presented an excellent political opportunity for the practical critique of ideology of capitalist economy and state alike (Habermas 1975: 30), given the simultaneous impoverishment of large masses of European citizens and incapacity of free-market ideology to cover up financial and industrial markets' inability to sustain themselves (Lucarelli 2011; Krugman 2012). Habermas (2012: 4) has argued forcefully that such a legitimation crisis is imminent. Curiously, however, he argues for a reform of European (and global) structures of governance given the capitalist economy and its financial architecture (ibid.: 3, 5, 7, and 112). For example, a practical critique of capitalist ideology seems to allow a normative criticism of "[t]he neoliberal assumption that commercial banks and their interbank markets are more efficient at evaluating financial risks than central banks" as such, and not only of the fact that this assumption "informed the original design of the Maastricht Treaty" (both from Lucarelli 2011: 215). Yet, curiously, Habermas (2012: 5) makes only the latter critique his central claim. Likewise, one would think that arguments for prioritizing the recapitalization of financial institutions over socially necessary programs (Lane 2012: 59) are only legitimate within a framework taking the necessity and priority of these institutions – and hence of their corresponding economic medium over social concerns – for granted. Here, too, Habermas considers this prioritization merely as a given condition under which the actual goal of his essay, the reform of the European Union, has to be pursued.[1]

These failures of a transposition of systemic crises of economic performance to a normative questioning of capitalism, along with the curious fate of American reform proposals, floated to great fanfare immediately after 2008, and retracted shortly thereafter, seem to indicate a crisis of the transposition mechanism. Partly, it can certainly be argued, the failure of U.S. reform proposals is due to the obstructionism currently holding Washington, D.C. in its grip. Partly, however, as pointed out above regarding a critique of media, the problem runs deeper: a critique of obstructionism, like a critique of media, presupposes that a form of public accountability could possibly persist, were the political system structured differently. I argue, however, that in Europe and the United States, the capitalist economic system does not suffer from a legitimation crisis despite being in an economic crisis. Consequently, it does not need to justify itself in order to maintain its citizen's allegiance. Its normative justification before the court of public opinion, which Habermas (1975: 43) had deemed crucial, has been replaced with a hollowed-out normativity largely identical with cynicism (Brown 2005: 43) – and the precariousness of employment which leaves no time for political activity (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005: 184), or actively discourages it in the grip of a more pervasive security apparatus (Harvey 2005: 77).

Habermas's argument for achieving a normative critique of objectively problematic socio-economic conditions of 'crisis' depends on the assumption of a lifeworld perspective which, as outlined above, can be identified as dissimilar to systemic communicative media (1989: 122). This assumption, I argue, must now be questioned. The phenomenon Habermas described with his concept of a lifeworld perspective presupposes at least three elements which have been systematically altered during the process of social, political, economic and cultural changes widely known as 'neoliberalism': 1. the objective necessity of legitimation; 2. the subjective possibility of a legitimizing or delegitimizing assessment of systemic action alignments; and 3. the possibility of an intersubjective normativity in general. In what follows, each of these three components' restructuring and subsequent disappearance through the relevant policies of the neoliberal project will be analyzed.

Concerning the Objective Necessity of Legitimation

As Habermas (1989: 137) had argued, every subsystem is in need of legitimation insofar as it is only actualized in a communicatively established and maintained situation, and thus beholden to an intersubjective, normative assessment of the situation. I argue, however, that the ability of subjects in advanced industrial societies to perceive an economic crisis as a crisis of the legitimation of capitalism, and consequently the state's attempts to restore the capitalist economy, has come to be severely threatened.

The prioritization of financial recapitalization over social measurements, and hence the legitimation of the state in sustaining the economic system is posed either exclusively, or with much greater publicity than the corresponding question of the legitimation of that economic system itself. Thus, the legitimation of the state, were it at stake in a public normative deliberation, would be threatened, mirroring the crisis of the legitimation of its underlying economic system. This, however, presupposes that a normative view on the state exists which recognizes its functions as more than merely sustaining economic accumulation. For Habermas (1975: 23), the state's legitimation in maintaining the capitalist economy was directed towards securing a basic equality of outcomes on the one hand, stability of macroeconomic situations on the other. As Wendy Brown suggests, however, this function of the state has changed in neoliberalism. "The state openly responds to needs of the market, whether through monetary and fiscal policy" – policies which Habermas's assessment would have recognized as well – but also "immigration policy, the treatment of criminals, or the structure of public education" (2005: 41).

Thus, not only have the functions of the state shifted away from the social security model Habermas (1975: 38 sq.) had diagnosed, but, the state has become structurally unable – and more importantly: structurally unwilling – to maintain social security and equitable market outcomes as desirable goals.[2] As Brown argues: "Rather, neoliberal rationality extended to the state itself indexes the state's success according to its ability to sustain and foster the market and ties state legitimacy to such success" (2005: 41; cf. Harvey 2005: 80). In other words: rather than maintaining its political capacities in trying to achieve a more socially equitable outcome, more ecologically sustainable conditions, and stable macroeconomic alignments against capitalist principles of accumulation (Habermas 1975: 34), the state now secures the struggle of an upper class against a lower class (Harvey 2011: 261; cf. Cerny 1994). "In doing so, the state is no longer encumbered by the danger of incurring the legitimation deficits predicted by 1970s social theorists" like Habermas (Brown 2005: 41). From this perspective, the above list of supposedly 'inevitable' short-term solutions to the European Sovereign Debt Crisis makes perfect sense: a neoliberal state is structurally unable, for example, to nationalize banks (Harvey 2005: 73).

Moreover, its legitimation cannot suffer from its inability to do so. This leads from the secondary issue of an absence of a crisis of state legitimation to the primary issue of an absence of a legitimation crisis of capitalism itself. Even those citizens whose ability to submit action orientations of elected officials to normative scrutiny remains intact amidst a depoliticized media have no means to meaningfully do so other than under the assumption of the inevitability of capitalism. One reason for this is that, as Brown (2005: 53) shows, that the lack of alternatives of liberal capitalism is all too real for most people. In the absence of an alternative to business-as-usual politics – i.e., in the absence of a meaningful alternative on the Left of the North American and European political spectrum that is not immediately suppressed or discredited– citizens can only choose between the merely formal alternatives of a party system in which an overarching imperative holds sway: "a governmentality of neoliberalism that eviscerates nonmarket morality and thus erodes the root of democracy in principle at the same time that it raises the status of profit and expediency as the criteria for policy making" (Brown 2005: 52; cf. Kellner 2012: 47).

Concerning the Subjective Possibility of Legitimation

For the second reason, one needs to go further. Up to this point, the problem can still be framed in terms of a Habermasian critique. Thus, the foregoing reconstruction of Brown's argument may have led to the suspicion that the neoliberal project is a repressive project: the violent imposition of a neoconservative free-market ideology[3] on unsuspecting populations by means of undemocratic institutions (such as the Mont Pelerin Society) and their influence on elected officials (de Angelis 2005: 251). This diagnosis is undoubtedly true for a large part of the neoliberal project: in both Chile and China, an autocratic government restructured the state, with help from outside "experts," such that it shed its last traces of social responsibility, pitted the population against one another as atomistic individuals, and kept them in check by means of police forces (Harvey 2005: 130).

Habermas's conception would cover this: neoliberalism would be the violent imposition of a specific subsystem's rules on subjects' conduct, a narrowing of the lifeworlds of individuals with an economic imperative. Subjects' lifeworld-perspectives on systemic imperatives would be narrowed, though they could not be replaced, since they remain as intersubjective sites of normative judgment. Neoliberal governance would consequently have to be seen as similar to the bureaucratization of a subjects' conduct that Habermas had identified in the political technology of the welfare state. By supporting a subject with welfare payments, a welfare regime has to constitute this subject as an individual whose needs are reduced to a juridical classification of necessary and superfluous needs, and whose life is quantified economically in the process (Habermas 1989: 361). Neoliberal practices replace, a Habermasian could argue, the content of this imposition, but not its form. Thus, a citizen is no longer individualized by a bureaucracy molding her as a welfare recipient – but she is individualized by a bureaucracy molding her as a rational-economic utility maximizer (workfare instead of welfare). Furthermore, she is juridified by reducing her collective rights to individual rights. This goes hand in hand with a formalization of concepts of equality. When an individual is presumed to be fully emancipated when formally equal before the law, but no attempts are made to make her actually capable of exercising this equality, her freedoms are jeopardized, and states become repressive (Harvey 2005: 81).

One could infer from this repressive status of the economic re-shaping of society in neoliberalism that it, too, has to presuppose – to respect – a certain grounding of a citizen's capacity to normatively assess what she is subjected to. This capacity would be derived from a lifeworld perspective which cannot fully be transformed by repressive governance because the lifeworld perspective is structurally dissimilar to the systemically mediated communicative routines repressive governance would implement. Habermas's theory would be partly vindicated.

This repressive hypothesis is misguided, however: neoliberalism goes much deeper. It is, as Brown (2005: 38) notes, a project whose supreme purpose is the re-structuring of subjectivities. It is a form of governmentality (cf. Lemke 2011). Governmentality, a term coined by Foucault, describes the combined usage of macropolitics – the imposition of a neoconservative free-market agenda by means of a state – and micropolitics: "powers that operate on the body and psyche in local and often non-obvious fashion" (Brown 2005: 72). The latter is especially insidious because it does not follow the repressive logic outlined above: rather, it entails "the directing and channeling of the behavior of the body individual, the body social, and the body politics by means other than force or even explicit rule" (ibid.: 73). Specifically, in the neoliberal project, "the extension of economic rationality to formerly noneconomic domains and institutions reaches individual conduct, or, more precisely, prescribes the citizen-subject of a neoliberal order" (ibid.: 42; cf. Bauman 2000). The neoliberal subject is configured in such a way that she subjects herself – voluntarily – to the imperatives of the economic subsystem (Wolin 2008: 239).

In Habermas's model, then, one would have to conclude that neoliberal governmentality produces the subjective element in which all subsystemic imperatives come to be exercised and simultaneously assessed: the lifeworld. If the lifeworld, as Habermas had argued, is to be seen as a reservoir of self-evidently given, unquestioned normative statements and assessments, neoliberalism can be formulated as a project of shaping intersubjective communication such that the reservoir to judge and assess any given situation no longer contains normative standards which are not already economic (cf. Sennett 1998). A neoliberal citizen cannot assess the normative validity of a subsystemic imperative other than from a specifically shaped position – as a possessive, atomistic, gender-neutral (which is to say: male) individual; a rational, egoistic utility-maximizer. Thus, in the above example, the citizen constituted as an individual who is formally equal before the law with her richer compatriots, but not actually able to afford justice, would not even be capable of recognizing this as an injustice were the neoliberal project fully developed. The judicial system would retain its full legitimacy despite not actually delivering equal justice before the law.

Fully developed, then, the neoliberal project would not be repressive because it would not need to be repressive.

It would not need to legitimize itself because its normativity is already identical to the reservoir of possible normative judgments any subject (i.e., individual) has at its disposal in any given situation. A fully subjectified neoliberal citizen will not be able to distinguish between the normal functioning of a capitalist economy and its crisis situations. As Habermas (1975: 3) had argued, an economic underperformance is only identifiable as a crisis if it subjectively perceived as such. Habermas explicitly (ibid.: 23) traces the ability to perform this identification back to the autonomy of the intersubjectively constituted reservoir of normative judgments given as lifeworld. If this reservoir, however, is restructured such that its contents are derived from the same subsystemic (economic) imperatives as that which it judges, citizens – atomized individuals – will not be able to experience structural changes as threats to their socially constituted identities.[4]

This is not the full picture, of course. On the contrary: the existence of very real, very widespread discontent and unrest signal that citizens' lifeworlds are not completely shaped and molded by neoliberal imperatives – that, even now, remnants of traditional normative judgments remain, as Habermas (1975: 80; cf. Habermas 2012: 49) had predicted. Examples include the Alter-globalization movements of the early 2000s, as well as Occupy since 2011. Would the contemporary Western media system really have to spend so much time and energy on suppressing the mediated representation of rebellion if rebellion were always already captivated by neoliberal economizations?

On a theoretical level, then, this could indicate that Habermas's perspective may still be partly right in arguing for the normative potential of lifeworlds. They may be produced by neoliberal practices on the individual level, but perhaps there is potential in their intersubjective constitution? Habermas (1989: 120) had argued, after all, that normative judgments are never just at an individual's disposal, but rather established out of every situation intersubjectively through speech acts: situation, subjectivities, and lifeworld horizons originate at the same time, and change with every communicative realignment in the situation. Perhaps the capacity to assess normative implications intersubjectively is what underlies the critical potential referenced above?

Concerning the Possibility of an Intersubjective Normativity

This critical potential is not, however, actualized as widespread action. The reason for this lies in the structure of the restructured lifeworld of neoliberal subjects. In turning citizens into atomistic individuals, neoliberal policies have removed the very possibility of communicatively established intersubjectivity, and thus normative judgments in general (Habermas 1989: 124). Individuals can no longer establish a communicative consensus outside of being already aligned along the imperatives of capitalist rationality. This can partly be seen in terms of the previous discussion: a large part of social movements whose goal is the change of global(ized) capitalist relations nevertheless voice demands that remain within the boundaries of a capitalist economy – despite the often invoked rhetoric of capitalism's obsolescence. An example is the World Social Forum, whose central demands, while including a global redistribution of wealth towards reaching the Millennium Development Goals, nevertheless take large parts of the global capitalist economy for granted.[5]

Since such organizations have to communicate with states and market actors, however, taking capitalism for granted could also, of course, be strategic. Much more instructive, then, is a look at the Occupy movement. Started as Occupy Wall Street in New York, it has since spread over the world, uniting 900 cities for a global rally in October 2011. It is not, however, these admirable achievements that are relevant here – for their effects, as has been noted from different normative perspectives (Stiglitz 2006; Harvey 2011; Dean 2012: Ch. 6), are limited at best – but rather the attempts of the movement to infuse its surrounding societies, and particularly the American one, with the potential to form a consistent and ongoing normative critique. In other words: one of the goals of Occupy is to build a lifeworld of intersubjective critique. This is evident in activist Eli Schmitt's (2011: 3) statement: "Someone asked what the action was, what we were going to do, and someone else responded that this was the action, that we were there to talk and organize." Another indicator is Marina Sitrin's (2011: 4) comment: "Most of us believe that what is most important is to open space for conversations—for democracy—real, direct, and participatory democracy. Our only demand then would be to be left alone in our plazas, parks, schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods so as to meet one another, reflect together and in assembly forms decide what our alternatives are." This, however, is not only symptomatic for the widespread conviction among occupiers that a new society and a new democracy were born. It is also symptomatic for the merely formal character of the central demand of Occupy (in most, if not all, of its incarnations): as soon as Occupy abandoned demands that, while certainly worthwhile, remained within the

capitalist economy – such as demands for the reintroduction of the Glass-Steagall Act – it became a mere call for horizontality as an organizing principle. That is, rather than making the establishment of a democratic public sphere (which is to say an intersubjective lifeworld, allowing a capability of normative assessments of social institutions) a means towards a thorough and radical social critique, Occupy remained on the formal level, and with increasing desperation, made an end out of creating a lifeworld for normative judgments (Harcourt 2012). I do not, however, want to argue for a condemnation of Occupy based on these grounds, as others (e.g., Dean 2012: Ch. 6) have done. It is hard to imagine that the normative question raised, though not answered by movements like Attac or Occupy is not transposed at least into widespread demotivation. What might explain the desperate state of the task of establishing normative demands that are not already part of the capitalist economy – or to establish an intersubjective lifeworld in general?

I suggest a third origin of the problem, that runs even deeper than the previous two. Part of neoliberal subjectivity, as has often been argued, is a radical individualism (Bröckling 2003: 22; Wolin 2008: 112; Gershon 2011: 538). For neoliberally molded individuals, an ethical imperative exists "to provide for their own needs and service their own ambitions," bearing "full responsibility for [their] action[s] no matter how severe the constraints of this action" (Brown 2005: 42). The neoliberal subject is constantly worn out by facing social obstacles as if they were natural (Sennett 1998: 130 sqq.), and more importantly, as if it were the subject's responsibility to remove them, or to fail (ibid.: 84 sqq.). The demands a neoliberal individual faces are insurmountable and exercise permanent pressure (Brown 2005: 20) – while the individual is, at the same time, left to face them alone, unable to come to a normative conclusion on whether they might be legitimate or not.

Thus, a legitimation crisis need no longer be associated with a motivation crisis and its corresponding potential to spread. A neoliberal subject does not need to be motivated: it is presumed – and thus forced – to be motivated to overcome all obstacles all by itself (Brown 2005: 22 and 25). Moreover, if it fails, it is always already infused with the inability to perceive this failure other than as its own personal failure, and it is driven by the will to overcome what it cannot perceive other than as its own weakness (ibid.: 16). Likewise, the terms of perceiving such failure are themselves economic and radically individualist: a lack of individual skills, capacities, and dexterity (McQuaid and Lindsay 2005). The neoliberal individual is permanently worn out and unable to develop the necessary perspective to perceive this as an onslaught on its well-being – which, according to Habermas's (1975: 43) diagnosis, would lead its motivation to vanish, and might lead it to question the normative validity of its social system.

Motivation is thus replaced by precariousness (Wolin 2008: 239). Subjects do not perform their tasks because they feel motivated for them, but because they are constantly pressured to perceive themselves as nothing but fulfilling the task (Bröckling 2003: 12). The neoliberal subject, as Boltanski and Chiapello (2005: 169) argue, is beholden to the general standards of 'project orientation' where

> the general standard, with respect to which all persons' and things' greatness is evaluated, is activity...Life is conceived as a series of projects ... [w]hat is relevant is to be always pursuing some sort of activity, never to be without a project, without ideas, to be always looking forward to, and preparing for, something along with other persons whose encounter is the result of being always driven by the impulse of activity.

This activity, however, hardly contributes to an intersubjectivity which might add up to an intersubjective lifeworld. The first and perhaps most important constraint is the mode of perceiving other people from an individualized, project-oriented vantage point: they are always competitors, or, at best, temporary team members, but never equal participants in the assessment of the situation (Bröckling 2003: 21). The potential for an intersubjective assessment of a situation is at least severely truncated by this hostile – in Habermas's (1989: 117) terms: strategic – relation of individuals to one another.

Even if they were to cooperate, however, cooperation will frequently be of a merely technical nature, and directed towards the success of every project. Boltanski and Chiapello's (2005: 169) analysis, while suggesting that individuals are adaptable – which could conceivably mean: tactically savvy in a possible strategy of perruque or everyday resistance tactics (de Certeau 1984) – also highlights that individual's adaptability and success is always measured within the project and by a superior. Subjects are economically potent and politically docile (Foucault 1995). Both conditions, especially when measurement is applied constantly and punishments are severe, preclude a normative judgment on the project as a whole (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005: 182).

Finally, projects are short-lived and precarious, depending on technological alignments (subject to accelerating rates of improvement or at least re-branding), performance standards (subject to change, if not constant change), minimal contract durations (shifting team memberships and working atmospheres), and other, more or less arbitrary

shifts and changes. An individual must adapt, which means it must always be ahead of itself – ahead of the situation, ready to realign and adapt, and to shed its contacts with its competitors which may become and cease to be team members in short spans of time (Bröckling 2003: 21; cf. also Pérez 2010; as well as the classical analysis by Schumpeter 1950).

A lifeworld, Habermas argued, requires experiences and formative judgments – in other words, it requires time and dedication to normative assessment. How is an individual to develop the ability to form and maintain a reservoir of normative orientation under conditions in which "the temporary contract is in practice supplanting permanent institutions in the professional, emotional, sexual, cultural, family, and international domains, as well as in political affairs"? (Lyotard 1984: 66)

Conclusion

In both cases, systemic imperatives – and especially the imperatives of what Habermas had identified as the economic subsystem – appear to have assimilated citizens' lifeworlds. A neoliberal subjectivity does not have a reservoir of possible communicatively sustained normative judgments to apply to its own and others' behavior which are not already aligned with the imperatives of the economic subsystem. Within Habermas's framework, one would thus have to conclude that the lifeworld has become what Habermas had explicitly argued it cannot become: a subsystem. This would mean that it has lost its position as implicit background or horizon – informing subjects, but not directly at their disposal in social situations (Habermas 1989: 123) – and became something directly manipulated by subsystemic imperatives. The latter, however, is not possible within Habermas's conceptualization of subsystemic imperatives as distinct from the social integration achieved by normative consensus (ibid.: 154). Were the lifeworld replaced by a subsystem attempting to functionally emulate it, the latter would have to be a subsystem producing normative judgments as direct systemic action orientations. This, however, would only be possible of a subject's normative judgments – which is to say, its entire behavior, all the way to unconscious judgments – could be programmed completely. How would such judgments be normative, however?

The neoliberal subject represents something far more insidious: a human being whose freedom is structured such that it subjects itself. Its ability to judge normatively is not impaired structurally, but in terms of content. The lifeworld of a neoliberal subject is not colonized by subsystemic imperatives in the sense that they have replaced the subject's ability to judge normatively. Rather, the subject is produced in such a way that its judgments, while remaining subjectively normative, cannot delegitimate the neoliberal capitalist apparatus of economic and political systems. The subject is in a permanent crisis of precariousness – but it is alone, and its normative judgments come to nothing. The capitalist economy is in a constant objective state of crisis – but it can endlessly reestablish itself as the only feasible alternative, thus precluding the subjective assessment which would turn a socio-economic crisis into an opportunity to call the socio-economic system into question.

Endnotes

1. Habermas (2012: 5) speaks of the "cunning of economic unreason" that brought the question of a reform of EU institutions to the political table.

2. This has recently been argued for Latin America by Jinkings and Guimaraes (2011).

3. Sheldon Wolin (2008: 137), argues that "[t]he so-called free market is not simply about buyers and sellers, or producers and owners, but about power relationships that are fundamental for the management of democracy."

4. A similar argument has been put forth by Heelas (1991) as well as McCabe (2003).

5. For a forceful description of what is nevertheless possible within these boundaries, see Cassen (2003).

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Durable Fiction: Danilo Kiš and his Library

Aleš Debeljak

As a historical and contemporary conglomerate of cultures and religions, languages and nations, the Balkans made their first imprint on the European public consciousness in the early nineteenth century. After the Greeks and a few other Balkan nations achieved statehood, they immediately subjected the diverse peoples on their territories to state-sponsored programs of ethnic homogenization. As a result, by the twentieth century, the legacy of Balkan hybridity, fluidity, and a mixture of ethnicities, languages, and cultures was preserved only in Yugoslavia. Today the "balkanisation" of a given community is a slur, suggesting the narcissistic fragmentation of large collectives into smaller splinter groups that assert themselves in bloodshed and hatred, the cunning moralism of purity, and the ritual evocation of ancient rights. The violent disintegration of the Yugoslav federation in the 1990s lent tragic support to this stereotype.

And yet a vibrant cultural tradition thrived in interwar Yugoslavia, a culture that encouraged and allowed the intense trafficking of ideas, attitudes, and symbols across linguistic and ethnic borders, and fostered an atmosphere of intellectual hybridity and cosmopolitanism. Ultimately, this tradition turned out to be more of a sliver than solid timber but nevertheless it fomented a movement called zenitism (zenithism), an historical avant-garde movement with an genuine Balkan twist. Ljubomir Micić edited the eponymous magazine for five years, turning it into a showcase for local experiments in German Expressionism and Russian Constructivism. His chauvinist idea of the barbaro-genius, the authentic Balkan man who in his creative zenith injects fresh blood into decadent and decaying Europe, perfectly captured the regionally popular belief that the Balkan peoples were untainted by corrupt European reason. The works of Slovenian poet Srečko Kosovel contained a trembling cadence of emancipatory prophecy. The poems of a Croatian poet Tin Ujević were full of insightful meditations on the passing of time. Ivo Andrić, whose work was claimed by Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks alike, expressed the fatalistic acceptance of misfortune. But none of these writers, all of whom reached beyond their own ethnic heritage, continues to have such a powerful attraction than Danilo Kiš.

The Last Yugoslav Writer

Danilo Kiš (1935-1989), an influential fiction writer, a prolific translator from French, Hungarian, and Russian, was a charismatic bon vivant. Jewish, Serbian, and Hungarian roots animated his cultural background. And yet, though he was born to a Jewish father and a Montenegrin mother, he proclaimed himself to be the child of the Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges and the Polish writer Bruno Schulz. He did not entirely reject ethnic allegiances, but rather than opting for any one of the collective identities on offered to him, he boldly embraced the ecumenical designation of the "last Yugoslav writer." This positioning allowed him to resist the appeal of the separate and competing nationalisms of his homeland. Following in his footsteps, I strive to this day to remain committed to the primordial realms of intimate geography, history, and community, even as I foster links to global cultural movements. Defying both the rigidity of nationalist navel-gazing and the blithe nonsense of global citizenship, I attempt, like Kiš, to trace the concentric circles of identity that emanate from images of the self, embedded in communal experience,

and ripple outward into local, regional, and national identities.

This layered, hybrid, and multi-faceted identity is available only to the particular gaze that has the transformative power to erode locally entrenched descriptions of everyday life and turn them into stories of universal meaning. This is the gaze of artists and writers in whose work mature reflection travels in the same compartment as the commitment to a chosen community that is different from one's ethnic or linguistic group. Such a cosmopolitan perspective necessitates individual deliberation and moral choice. It necessitates choosing membership in an elusive community in which the imperative to be human is not merely a given right, but a responsibility as well. What protects those of us who still want to participate in a life in which the idea of common humanity has not yet withered away is the frail hope that a critical attitude toward exclusivist ideologies will give us the power to resist the status quo and prevent us from the cynical acceptance of evil.

Against Exclusivism

Danilo Kiš was my writer-hero. I admired his moral insistence that the central question for writers of the twentieth century was the question of camps, of Auschwitz and the Gulag. I warmed to his lyrical procedures that accommodated both the litany of railway stations and the tremor of an anxious soul. I liked his claim that kitsch is as indestructible as a plastic bottle, his resigned, though not defeatist, realization that, having spent his last decade in voluntary Parisian exile, contemporary French intellectual debates were familiar to him, while the debates of his native realm would remain forever alien to his French peers. I cherished his persistence in the belief that literature is written with the totality of one's being, not with language alone, and this made him cling to his Serbo-Croat literary idiom despite the false comforts of French, the adopted language of his everyday life as an exile. I believed in his anti-nationalist hybridization of literary genres and cultural experiences, his opposition to the chauvinist elevation of "the chosen nation" to the level of a metaphysical Idea that justifies any and all means to advance its protection. With his ethical integrity and aesthetic practice, Kiš was the voice that inspired me most in my pursuit of the true cosmopolitan attitude.

I discovered Danilo Kiš in the early 1980s, when, as a student at the Ljubljana University, Slovenia, I shared the larger home of Yugoslavia with him. Coming across his stories was a revelation, and good luck, as his literary work had not been canonized yet. In fact, in the wake of the publication of his collection of short stories, The Tomb for Boris Davidovich (first published in 1976; two years later, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich published the English translation), a fierce controversy erupted over the proper use of literary methods. It was the biggest literary polemic in the small country at the time and Kiš was subject to the public character assassination and harassment by communist cronies that ultimately resulted in his emigration. Kiš went to live in France where he first taught Serbo-Croat at provincial universities and then settled in Paris. I went into the exile of his fiction. Three decades later, I am still its happy denizen. I continue to draw sustenance from Kiš, never more than today, in our world of capitalism without alternative. Of course I'm aware that to contemplate the consolations of library as a continuation of human community is to engage in what seems a vaguely indecent pursuit in these hard times, and yet I can't help but daydream. I daydream about books and reality, literature and mortality, I daydream about durable fiction of Danilo Kiš.

The Importance of People Without Importance

In his work, notably in the story Encyclopedia of the Dead (first published in 1983; Farrar, Strauss and Giroux published the English translation in 1989), Kiš exploited the metaphor of the library, and where there's a literary library, there's Jorge Luis Borges. It was Borges's meta-fictional strategy that made Kiš exclaim that the history of literature is divided into "before Borges and after him." The claim may be debated, but it is indisputable that Borges strongly influenced Kiš's literary use of documents, chronicles, and fact-based references. Plowing through their respective claims to truth, Kiš created fictional works of the highest aesthetic order.

Borges devised a metaphor of a library whose aim was to be the universe. In his story The Library of Babel (1941), the library is enormous as it contains the infinity of all past, present, and future events. Borges' library is as

unlimited as the anxiety of those who look in vain in the orderly rows of bookshelves for an explanation to chaos.

Kiš was impressed by Borges' library, but not content. He chose a sharp, passionate, and doubtless polemically pregnant rendition of the trope in Encyclopedia of the Dead. First, First, Kiš's encyclopedia, the essential book in this library, is open only to those people who are already dead. Second, the selective mechanism is at work even within the community of the dead. Kiš's library excluded all of those whose names had already merited inclusion in any other book, lexicon, or library. The people who didn't make it into any of the existing Who's Who reference books thus find sole recognition in the genuine encyclopedia of the dead, the encyclopedia of the nameless. This methodological gesture is nothing less than a celebration of the equalizing power of death. It is a macabre reminder of the frequently ignored principles of freedom, brotherhood, and equality.

The encyclopedia's entries weave a web of events, the lullabies sung by the deceased, the relatives and wedding guests, postmen with feather-light feet and diligent milkmaids, all the people the deceased used to see, know, smell. Each entry is endless. But isn't this obvious? The web that an individual life creates, after all, is so extensive that it literally captures the entire world, for every person sooner or later crosses paths with another person who has been in touch with the deceased man's acquaintance. As the web spreads to include relatives and relatives of relatives as well as acquaintances and casual encounters, the encyclopedia of the dead reveals its emancipatory potential, intimating that we are connected with all living and dead things and people in the world. This labyrinth, this impossible-to-untangle skein of links, running both horizontally and vertically, is so vast that, during my first reading of Kiš's story, I had the thrilling sense of discovering such an exceptionally accurate and detailed map of England, say, that was actually England itself, as Josiah Royce described in his book The World and the Individual (1899). Moreover such a map welcomes constant repetition ad infinitum, for every map of England must contain itself, and thus progressively accumulates multitudes of its own image.

Kiš's encyclopedia, however, represents the multitude that is always already there. But here the vocabulary of entries metamorphoses from the linear quality of ordinary written records that sets the norms of our everyday speech and our chronological lives into simultaneously present slices of life which all the deceased suffered through. The entire history of a person is summarized in a few sentences, defined not only by the tedious perspective of basic information – birth date, education, marital status, addresses changed, jobs held – but rather with an artistic sensibility that summons the most ambitious of ideals, the totality of being.

The Book, the secret project of Stephane Mallarme, shines through this unfulfilled desire to sing the totality of being, to live the totality of song. Mallarme, the founder of French Symbolism in the late nineteenth century, deified language and its capacity for a dream-like synthesis in which all self-division is overcome and "all earthly existence must ultimately be contained in the book." Mallarmé, to be sure, never wrote the Book. His maxim that everyone and everything that occurs in the world must one day arrive into the Book, however, was recuperated with aesthetic beauty and social sensitivity under the pen of Danilo Kiš.

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