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# Contents

## Special Section on Academia in the Internet Age

## Articles

# The (Coming) Social Media Revolution in the Academy

Jessie Daniels, Joe R. Feagin

A revolution in academia is coming. New social media and other web technologies are transforming the way we, as academics, do our job. These technologies offer communication that is interactive, instantaneous, global, low-cost, and fully searchable, as well as platforms for connecting with other scholars everywhere.

## Scholarship: Knowledge Production and Use in a Networked Society

Scholars now completing PhD's have likely never known a world without the Internet and social media. For them, GoogleScholar is where you go to begin a search for articles, not a brick-and-mortar library or its bound journals. For scholar-activists, social media offer additional promises of public sphere engagement with other specialists beyond one's discipline through blogs and Twitter. As barriers to long-distance travel increase, scholars are creating virtual conferences through digital video and web conferencing or follow conferences from afar via Twitter hashtags. For those who travel to conferences, backchannel Twitter communications can be important ways to extend the hallway conversations with colleagues. Scholars are experimenting with crowd-sourcing in ways that supplement old forms of peer-review. As publishing moves to ereaders, academic publishers face challenges to keep up with revolutionary changes.

Ultimately, this technological transformation is going to have major implications on expert knowledge. The Internet increases voices and knowledge available to all. Elitism in the expert knowledge world is declining; the Internet democratizes knowledge building and use. Much more knowledge has become available, and the distinction between experts and ordinary folks, what Gramsci might have called "organic intellectuals," is declining. However, new problems arise. The ability of those without critical-methodological training to deal with data smog (including fake, misinforming, and corporate-propaganda websites) is a serious barrier to peoples' understanding. Many Internet "analyses" remain superficial, even among supposedly expert analysts. The Internet provides the world with great new opportunities at democratization, open-source information and collaborative of scholarly knowledge production, while also containing serious, often hidden, pitfalls.

## Online Research in the Academy

Now, academics do so much research online that it is difficult to remember a time when this wasn't the case. In the dark ages before the Internet, doing research involved a library, searching drawers of card catalogs and bound volumes, and reading hard-copies of printed books and journals. This was supplemented by searching microfilm of newspapers and magazines, and much standing over a copying machine. Today, much work of academics has been transformed. Young professors and graduate students go to libraries, but rather than look in card catalogs, they look at library computers and their own wifi-ed laptops. There are still books on shelves, but librarians tell us these are

circulated less as use of online databases and electronic access to journals and ebooks continue to increase--often outstripping the cost of older library technologies.

Most information once available only in hard copy is now accessible for academics working away from their campus or college library. This opens up tremendous possibilities for working remotely, collaborating with colleagues globally, and being untethered to particular locations. In addition to databases indexing journal articles behind the library paywalls, research tools that index scholarly resources on the open web are widely used by academics. GoogleScholar and GoogleBooks are now part of the repertoire of many researchers.

## Academic Blogging and Microblogging

Academics are increasingly bloggers. In many ways, this is a natural fit. Academics mostly love writing and blogging is, at its heart, an activity involving much writing. Academic blogging involves writing that is a remix of such items as a news story, an op-ed piece, and a critical review. Academic bloggers frequently use blogs to keep up with the relevant literature in their field, thereby providing a kind of public note-taking and research-sharing exercise. Academic bloggers also use blogging as a rough draft for ideas they later develop fully for peer-reviewed papers or books. (The second author has done exactly this for a new book, White Man's Party, on which he is currently working.) As they engage a wider audience beyond peers in their research subfield, academics' blogging can become scholar-activism. As Jennifer Ho remarks recently in the Journal of Women's History (Winter, 2010):

> My initial blog entries were a form of pre-writing for my book chapters. Yet the sense of accountability that the blog inspired quickly grew beyond one of writing accountability to one of community accountability. . . . as I started to gather a group of readers beyond the friends and family in my address book, I began to see my blog writing as not merely free writing for my book but fundamental writing for issues about which I care deeply. And I began to see that my academic writing and my blog writing enrich and enhance one another; they both speak to the feminist ideals I believe in speaking truth to power and equality for all people.

Ho and other academic bloggers have embraced Internet technologies in ways that broaden the scope of their research work beyond college walls and in ways reaching beyond old disciplinary silos. This is partly about reaching audiences in disparate geographic locations, but more importantly it is about connecting with multiple publics with a shared interest across institutional and other social boundaries.

Micro-blogging, such as the highly popular Twitter, is a way to send short updates (140 characters or less) to a collection of individuals ("followers") that each user uses to their own liking. It seems surprising academics have taken to Twitter, given their deserved reputation for exceeding 140 characters, but they have. Academics, like others who use Twitter, have found short updates a useful way to find and maintain connections to others who share their research and other interests. While websites like Twitter can be accessed via desktop or laptop computer, they are also widely accessible via mobile devices, such as smart cellphones. Networking at academic conferences is no longer restricted to dull hallways of indistinguishable hotels, but simultaneously extended and constricted to fit within the short downtimes in any busy day. Time between classes means time enough to catch up on the interesting water-cooler conversation about my research area of interest among a handful of people on Twitter. For academics who work in departments or institutions where few share their research interests, Twitter can be a useful way to expand one's intellectual impact and lessen intellectual isolation.

## Virtual Conferences and Backchannels and Curating the Ideal Academic Department

The virtual conference is another significant shift in how academics share their work. Recently, Jessie received the following invitation, via email:

> This is a virtual conference, presenters are not required to physically travel to a conference location but instead provide their presentations to viewers online. It's completely free to submitters and viewers. The goal of the conference is to share the work being done...

While these are not yet commonplace, the prohibitive cost of much professional travel, and shrinking department

budgets to cover travel, may speed more of such virtual sharing of research with colleagues. While invitation to a virtual conference is still unusual, academics still meet face-to-face at annual conferences which are also being transformed by digital technologies.

Backchannel communications between those attending in-person conferences help academics make connections in real time. Text messaging and Twitter and blog updates allow networks of academics to coordinate in-person connections. Backchannel communications also expand knowledge distribution. As one friend was sitting in a conference session Jessie could not attend, she could read her Twitter updates about key research presented at that session.

For academics that may toil in relative isolation from others who share their immediate interests, the social connection of blogging and microblogging can also provide an opportunity to curate the ideal academic department. While in another era, scholars may have identified strongly with their PhD-granting university, the college or university, or the academic department in which they are currently employed, the rise of social media allows for a new arrangement of colleagues. Scholars now have conversations via Twitter, Facebook and blogs that maintain close collegial ties with others who share their scholarly interests even though they may not share an institutional home or the same academic department. Today, rather than being restricted to the colleagues one finds in ones' own department, scholars (and teachers) go online to find intellectual companionship, in effect, curating the ideal academic department and tailoring it to their interests.

## Open Peer-Review & Crowd-Sourced Edited Volumes

The open source movement has broad implications for higher education and the work academics do. While one early experiment in open-review at the journal Nature is regarded as a failure [1], there is a new attempt by Elsevier to launch an open-review system. Whether Elsevier's effort will succeed remains to be seen, but there are now numerous examples of post-publication peer review that appear to out-perform traditional pre-publication peer review, especially in the natural sciences. In summer 2010 a research paper published in Science claimed to have identified genes associated with longevity with "77% accuracy"; it soon received a detailed and devastating post-publication review from the Google-owned DNA service, 23andme. This review was followed by detailed critiques from other science bloggers. [2] The future many academics in the natural and other sciences envision is one where post-publication peer review dominates scholarly publication, with little or no pre-publication review necessary.

Crowd-sourcing, the concept that an open call to an undefined group of people will gather those best able to contribute with relevant and fresh ideas, is one that is appealing to many and could have interesting implications for the work academics do. In May 2010, academics Dan Cohen and Tom Scheinfeldt launched an exciting experiment they called "Hacking the Academy." Their idea was to crowd source an edited volume about new approaches to higher education in one week. They asked potential contributors to consider questions like: Can an algorithm edit a journal? Can a library exist without books? Can students build their learning management platforms? Can a conference be held without a program? Can Twitter replace a scholarly society? In keeping with the spirit of "hacking" in which they reimagined the edited volume, Cohen and Scheinfeldt devised this strategy:

"Any blog post, video response, or other media created for the volume and tweeted (or tagged) with the hashtag #hackacad will be aggregated at hackingtheacademy.org (submissions should use a secondary tag — #class #society #conf #journal #book #tenure #cv #dept #edtech #library — to designate chapters). The best pieces will go into the published volume. The volume will also include responses such as blog comments and tweets to individual pieces."[3]

## Academic Publishers Confront E-Publishing, and E-Reading

Since 2005 the explosive growth of dramatic new publishing technologies is revolutionizing creation of and access to books. Millions of ebooks, earticles, and ereaders have created major challenges for academics and academic publishers. Publishers have seen ebooks increase to 10-20 percent of total sales, and the number of one major ereader, the Kindle, is now more than 8 million. Millions of other ereaders have also been sold.

Ereaders are lightweight, hold thousands of books, and can be carried almost anywhere. They allow people to

read articles and books when they want, at larger fonts, with easy notetaking. They allow for nearly instantaneous downloads of hundreds of thousands of books. (Articles on the epublishing revolution can be found daily at www. teleread.com).

In a recent interview, Clay Shirky, prominent Internet and ebook technology analyst, asks a critical question: Who will vet for academic and other readers the billions of new books and articles that will explode across epublishing websites.[4] Now publishers provide critical editorial work that makes for strong books. Without that editing and other publishers' value-added work, most books would be, as one editor put it to us, just "junk." Self-publishing on the web and other web-publishing mostly leaves out critical editorial revising and copyediting. For the billions of publications soon to be epublished, new software and vetting websites will be required to edit and polish publications for academic writers and to evaluate these new epublications for quality for academic readers.

The web cannot do this yet, and the visibility they generate for ebooks is not what counts, but the reliability and worth of who says something is worth reading.

Some existing paper book publishers are getting into epublishing with innovative new projects, such as the joint hardback/ebook series of short social science books under the editorship of Ben Agger and Steve Rutter at Routledge. This hardback part involves print-on-demand technology of (POD), which integrates traditional pulp publishing with Internet ordering. Cautiously, but actively, publishers will likely couple new epublishing ideas to their old tested models. Ebooks have the huge advantage of being fully searchable, more portable, and link-filled to other media and sources.

Web epublishing has also opened up much larger and global audiences for articles. One U.S. social science ejournal started by a sociologist, Fast Capitalism, get hundreds of thousands of monthly readers and much global visibility for authors and journal, including many submissions from researchers overseas. In creating online journals, the humanities are currently well ahead of the social science, but in the near future we predict that most social science journals will be ejournals (the ASR is already readable online).

These technological developments have serious implications for the academic enterprise. We only have room to list a few other issues: Ebook retailers often price serious academic books too low for them to be viable for publishers and authors. Until someone works out how to financially support serious academic book publishing ebooks available and on the web, we may see less serious academic publishers disappearing and fewer serious research efforts in book form. Online piracy of earticles and ebooks is skyrocketing, raising again the same question of academic ebook viability.

## Digital Humanities but No Digital Sociology

All these changes in scholarship have been taken up with a great deal more enthusiasm by some in the academy than others. Our colleagues in the humanities have embraced digital technologies much more readily than those of us in sociology or the social sciences more generally. A casual survey of the blogosphere reveals that those in the humanities (and law schools) are much more likely to maintain academic blogs than social scientists. In terms of scholarship, humanities scholars have been, for more than ten years, innovating ways to combine traditional scholarship with digital technologies. To name just a two examples, scholars in English have established a searchable online database of the papers of Emily Dickinson and historians have developed a site that offers a 3D digital model showing the urban development of ancient Rome in A.D. 320. There are significant institutions being built in the digital humanities including the annual Digital Humanities Conference, which began in 1989, and the National Endowment for the Humanities' Office of Digital Humanities.

Sociology lags far behind in the adoption of digital tools for scholarly work. As Paul DiMaggio and colleagues noted in 2001, "sociologists have been slow to take up the study of the Internet" ("The Social Implications of the Internet," Annual Review of Sociology, 2001, p.1). While there are notable exceptions, such as Andrew Beveridge's digitizing of Census maps (www.socialexplorer.com), when looking at the field as a whole these sorts of innovations are rare in sociology. In contrast to the decade-long conference in the digital humanities, there is no annual conference on "digital sociology." Sociology graduate students Nathan Jurgensen and PJ Rey recently organized a conference on "Theorizing the Web," that drew luminaries in sociology Saskia Sassen and George Ritzer, but this is the first sociology conference (that we are aware of) to focus exclusively on understanding the digital era from a sociological perspective. Analogously, there is no large institution, like the NEH seeking to fund digitally informed sociological research. The reasons for this sociological lag when it comes to the Internet are still not clear, but some point to the

problems of getting digital publication projects recognized by tenure and promotion review committees.

## Implications for Hiring, Promotion and Tenure

Scholars across disciplines often express reservations about the use of social media as a "waste of time" or a "distraction" that takes them away from their academic pursuits. Christine Hurt and Tung Yin refer to blogging without tenure as "an extreme sport" because of the risks involved (2006, p. 1235). They enumerate these risks of blogging for untenured faculty as including: the amount of time involved, being controversial, being wrong, and sharing too much personal information. These are all legitimate concerns that any blogger (not just an academic) should weigh in the balance before engaging with social media.

However, our experience with our academic blog (www.racismreview.com) has been quite the opposite of these pitfalls. Since we started the blog in 2007, a dozen or more junior faculty and graduate students have served as guest bloggers for us. These guest bloggers typically write about their own research and use the blog to reach a wider audience, which may include potential employers. It is now commonplace for graduate students' guest blog stints to appear on academic CV's or in cover letters for academic positions. How these end up being evaluated by hiring committees remains an open question.

When it comes to promotion and tenure, the recognition of the digital production of knowledge is still not uniformly recognized across institutions or disciplines. There are a variety of mechanisms within existing structures that could allow for the recognition of this sort of knowledge production. For instance, some institutions allow for a category known as "creative works in one's discipline." Originally intended to include works in fine or performing arts like interpretive dance, music scores or paintings, this category is expanding to include digital works of scholarship as "creative." At other institutions, there is a category of work considered for promotion and tenure called "dissemination of research," typically used to include public speaking or letters to the editor of newspapers. Increasingly, this is being adapted to include digital works. And most institutions have a "service" category that could also be expanded to include the digital production of knowledge, such as academic blogging. One thing is certain, as more and more scholars take up digital practices that expand their academic work, they will begin to expect that this work be taken much more seriously by hiring, promotion and tenure committees.

## Implications for the Meaning of Expert Knowledge

The Internet has had a democratizing effect on expertise. One scholar referred to it as expertise as a "withered paradigm" given the web (Walsh, 2003). Concepts that once may have seemed an agreed upon cultural value, like "equality" and "objectivity" are now fought over online in ways unimagined previously. Similarly, concepts that have the weight of considerable scientific evidence behind them, such as global warming, become contested by climate change deniers. One especially pernicious way that the Internet challenges the notion of expertise is through the proliferation of hard-to-detect propaganda, much of it funded by wealthy arch-conservatives. For instance, the emergence of cloaked websites that disguise authorship in order to conceal a political agenda can be very confusing. The "California Latino Water Coalition" appears to be a grassroots organizing effort to stop the corporate control of the water supply, but it is in fact a front group for corporate agribusiness. A casual web user would never know this from the URL LatinoWater.com, without a visit to an additional site such as Internic WhoIS or SourceWatch. The presence of intentionally disguised propaganda online, along with the challenge to expertise brought on by the democratizing of the web, means that what we say we know is a constantly contested political terrain. The evaluation of expertise in this new online environment often has more to do with good graphic design than with the text-based content.

## Conclusion

For some, the revolution is already here. The increasingly digital, geographically distributed nature of the work academics do opens up exciting new possibilities for research, collaboration and an open-source approach to peer-

review, knowledge production and dissemination. For scholar-activists, the web creates new avenues for engaging with wider publics. Yet, the expanding, and radically democratized audience also challenges old paradigms of expertise. The democratizing influence of the Internet also has serious implications for expertise and how we evaluate expert knowledge claims.

## Endnotes

1. See the discussion here: http://www.nature.com/nature/peerreview/debate/nature05535.html .

2. See the discussion here: http://cameronneylon.net/blog/p-%E2%89%A0-np-and-the-future-of-peer-review/

3. See the description here: http://hackingtheacademy.org/what-this-is-and-how-to-contribute/.

4. http://bnreview.barnesandnoble.com/t5/Interview/Clay-Shirky/ba-p/2880

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# The Man from Somewhere: Author, Affiliation, and Letterhead

Patricia Mooney Nickel

## Introduction

This is not an essay composed for the Telos competition; it is an essay about the Telos competition. I addresses "no specific question or theme" other than the request for the author's institutional affiliation, a form of symbolic capital that, for much of his career, the founder of Telos could not have produced. The seemingly open invitation to participate in the Telos essay competition masks a union of author and affiliation that functions powerfully as it shapes academic careers according to the quest for the knowledge authority embedded in institutional letterhead and directs creative energies into the collection of status displays, while knowledge continues to be legitimated according to its institutional origination. I argue that the value relations within which the potential Telos author is embedded belong to what Michel Foucault described as the "author function." I explore these value relations through a consideration of the ways in which manners, money, and letterhead circulate through academic status displays, which preserve an economy of affiliation that portrays the personal consequences of status disqualification as matters of merit, when they are in fact matters of governing the boundaries of legitimate knowledge.

## From the Author Function to the Affiliation Function

The requirement that one be affiliated with an institution in order to enter the Telos essay competition suggests that the author must produce an affiliation in order to be known as an author at all. Affiliation as a criterion of recognition indicates that the status of "author" is achieved on the basis of factors other than the composition of a text (authoring). In order to understand this identification of the author in the institutional context of academic life, I revisit Michel Foucault's inquiry into how some texts come to be acknowledged as authored, while others do not. Foucault (1998) raises the question, what is the function, or the usefulness, of the title "author" in relationship to present social relations and the management of meaning and legitimate knowledge? For Foucault (1998) the "author's name manifests the appearance of a certain discursive set and indicates the status of this discourse within a society and a culture... The author function is therefore characteristic of the mode of existence, circulation, and functioning of certain discourses in society" (211). From this perspective, the author's name designates not only a person, but also a particular discourse within which some individuals are able to achieve authoritative status through the production of texts, which become objects of appropriation subject to value relations (Foucault 1998: 211-212). In academic discourse today, the same is true of affiliation, which performs the role of distinguishing which academic authors are worthy of recognition/valorization and, as a result, governs the circulation of knowledge. In its present constitution of author status, the affiliation function legitimizes a particular discourse and allows for the institutional extraction of value from those individuals who "author" it.

As a basis for categorizing and valorizing "legitimate knowledge," the author function can be extended to the role of affiliation in academic literary practices positioned within the institutional framework of the university. As Joseph R. Urgo (1999) notes:

"Traditionally, affiliation fixed paternity through adoption or the legal connection of an illegitimate child to its father. Today the term is institutional, not familial, but its roots are nonetheless in assigning origins to someone, something more than employment, something closer to identity... affiliation listed in print below one's name is a mark not so much of destination or residency but of origin and legitimacy" (18-19).

While the title "author" provides a basis for the categorization of texts (Foucault 1998: 210), titles achieved through affiliation provide the basis for the categorization of those who produce them.

Employed as a qualification, affiliation acts as an efficient means of governing the boundaries of knowledge according to its institutional origination. If the author function characterized the relationship between individual, text, and the circulation of meaning, the affiliation function subverts this relationship by first qualifying (and thus identifying) the text in relationship with an institution and subsequently appropriating the author as a conduit for the institutional legitimation of knowledge. This legitimacy by origination suggests, as Russell Jacoby (2000) explains:

"that the author of the book passed the test, gaining the approval of a specific network, which filtered out the unkempt and unacceptable. It is a notice of a serious and reputable work. It serves to reassure as well as intimidate readers and reviewers. Even with the requisite qualifier – the opinions and mistakes are strictly the author's – who wants to challenge a book inspected by scores of scholars, published by a major university, and supported by several foundations?" (233).

Affiliation takes over as the source of authority for a text; the legitimacy of the text originates in the institution with which the author is affiliated. The reader enters into an implicitly affirmative relationship with the legitimacy of the institution as the institution stands in as a characteristic of the author, who, in turn, legitimates the institution as a place from which legitimate knowledge originates. The legitimacy of institutions depends upon the author as a vessel for their value and the author depends upon the institution for the status of author. Even if one agrees with Roland Barthes (1977) that to politicize the text "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author," the life of the author cannot be understood outside of the affiliation function, which must preserve the author in order to preserve the privilege of affiliation upon which the power of the relationship between institutions, knowledge, and governing depends.

We can examine the author function as it manifests in the academic profession in order to uncover how it is specifically related to the production of legitimate knowledge within an institutional framework that includes not only universities, but the publication outlets, professional associations, non-profits, foundations, and government organizations that participate in the relations of power/knowledge. In his argument for the "genre function" Anis Bawarshi (2000) notes that we "need a concept that can account not only for how certain 'privileged' discourses function, but also for how all discourses function, an overarching concept that can explain the social roles we assign to various discourses and those who enact and are enacted by them. Genre is such a concept" (338). Bawarshi (2000) is concerned with how to account for that speech that does not achieve author status and thus author-value: "Because we are conceptually limited by the author-function to dismiss nonprivileged (that is, nonliterary) discourse as 'everyday speech that merely comes and goes,' we do not know how to value it" (339). Bawarshi (2000) recognizes genre as a literary institution and seems to propose the genre function as a potential alternative to the author function. This proposal has interesting potential, especially in its extension to academic disciplinary boundaries. I agree with Bawarshi (2000) that the author function may be positioned within the genre function: "it is quite possible that the author-function is itself a function of literary genres, which create the ideological conditions that give rise to this subject we call 'author'" (338). However, while Bawarshi (2000) wants to understand the author privilege as a function of genre, for the purposes of this essay I want to understand the author privilege as a function of affiliation.

Building on Bawarshi's (2000) line of reasoning, I argue that, like genre, affiliation constitutes discourses' and writers' "modes of existence, circulation, and functioning within a society." If the author function explains that we assign value and legitimacy to texts according to the title "author," the affiliation function explains that we assign value and legitimacy to the author according to institutional affiliation, which already belongs to an ensemble of knowledge (Foucault 1980). The function of affiliation is to mark the boundaries of legitimate knowledge and legitimate stances towards knowledge as they are embodied in the author. Affiliation privilege as the basis for author-value can thus be positioned within Foucault's broader oeuvre, specifically his concern with the value relations of power/knowledge. Indeed, Foucault's (1980) understanding of power/knowledge may already represent an argument for the affiliation function. Through Foucault's lens it can be argued that when institutional affiliation constructs the author, it also constructs our sense of the origination of legitimate knowledge; affiliation governs the boundaries of legitimate knowledge production as it governs who is allowed to participate in its production. Discourse is authored by individuals who are "authored" by affiliation with institutions. These affiliations function to marginalize

those discourses that are not legitimized by an institutional positioning within what Foucault (1980) recognized as "discursive regimes" involving power effects "peculiar to the play of statements." Institutions participate in these regimes as they sanction knowledge according to "rules of formation" belonging to the ensemble of practices that govern knowledge production:

> "It is a question of what governs statements, and the way in which they govern each other so as to constitute a set of propositions which are scientifically acceptable, and hence capable of being falsified by scientific procedures. In short, there is a problem of the regime, the politics of the scientific statement. At this level it's not so much a matter of knowing what external power imposes itself on science, as of what effects of power circulate among scientific statements, what constitutes, as it were, their internal regime of power, and how and why certain moments of that regime undergoes a global modification" (Foucault 1980: 112-113).

The affiliation function contributes to the stability of these knowledge regimes and governs statements as it constitutes the authors of knowledge statements according "rules of formation" that include an institutional subjectivity predisposed to the present.

The author function demonstrates how the status requirements associated with the title "author" influence the quest to become an author, which today must involve the quest for affiliation. Like the status of author cannot be achieved today without affiliation, Foucault (1998) observed that the status of author could not be achieved anonymously: an "anonymous text posted on a wall probably has an editor – but not an author" (211). Certainly, one could write without affiliation, but to do so within the value relations of the academic career is akin to writing anonymously. There is no shortage of venues for "graduate students and post-graduate researchers to tell the world about their work"; in today's crowded corridor of self-publication, against which the author function guards, one not only can read about the work of graduate students and post-graduate researchers, but also the intimate minutia that accompanies it: taking a break from the diss. to walk the dog; need more beer if I am going to finish ch 2; watching American Idol while reading Adorno; celebrating finishing draft of ch on culture with chocolate. One can readily tell the world about their workings and their work; what the Telos essay competition offers is an opportunity for graduate students and post-graduate researchers to be recognized as authors; to have their work celebrated, endorsed, distinguished, and further affiliated; it offers an opportunity to enter into a relation of value. For the purposes of the Telos competition, the unaffiliated writer is anonymous in the sense that she cannot be identified as an author; she is a cipher in the sense that she cannot be valued or contribute value. Affiliation anonymity (independent scholarship) thus becomes productive as it governs who is, and who is not, able to achieve valued authorship: what is legitimately said to be knowledge is governed by who is allowed to say it, which is governed by the "fit" between an author and an institution. Thus, the affiliation function attempts to secure the borders of "legitimate knowledge" against the undisciplined circulation of unauthorized texts.

## Money, Manners, and the Achievement of Letterhead

> For one kind of passport -
> smiling lips part
> For others -
> an attitude scornful.
>
> — Vladimir Mayakovsky, My Soviet Passport

To request an author's affiliation is a powerful act: for one affiliation "smiling lips part," for others, "an attitude scornful." It is therefore troubling that the modern academy cannot determine how to interact with an author without first identifying their affiliation, which is most basically the achievement of access to letterhead. Letterhead, a symbol of one's affiliation, conveys much more than one's address; it affords a form of stylized power to those who possess it. Like the "extent of the power of money is the extent of my power..." (Marx 1978: 103), the extent of the power of one's institutional affiliation is the extent of the power that one has to participate in knowledge production. When affiliation circulates like money through the currency of letterhead, "what I am and am capable of is by no means determined by my individuality" (Marx 1978: 103). When publication depends upon affiliation, "one no longer dares to appear as he is..." as official university letterhead ensures that "one will never know well those with whom he deals..." (Rousseau 1964: 38).

Indication of one's institutional affiliation is also the donning of attire and just as "richness of attire may announce a wealthy man, and elegance a man of taste," (Rousseau 1964: 37) institutional affiliation may announce a scholar's work as being worthy of recognition. The "greater the prestige of the university with which a scholar is associated, the greater the readiness to credit his work..." (Gouldner, 1970, 201). While "money is the supreme good, therefore its possessor is good," in the academic marketplace, institutional affiliation is the supreme good and therefore its possessor is good; affiliation "is the real mind of all things and how then should its possessor be stupid?" (Marx 1978: 103). As Alvin W. Gouldner (1970) observed:

> "Harvard's social position tends to have a 'halo effect' on the prestige of its faculty members. Commonly, that is, the higher the national repute of a university, the higher the prestige of those associated with it. Simply by virtue of being at Harvard a man gets a substantial measure of 'unearned prestige.' A university's prestige, of course, affects the bargaining position of its faculty... [referring] to the treatment of his work in its intellectual market" (200).

A scholar may be "bad, dishonest, unscrupulous, stupid," but their institutional affiliation may be "honoured, and therefore so is its possessor" (Marx 1978: 103). The prestige of the institution, as well as the rank that one has achieved within its structure, stands in for merit. As Stanley Fish (1989) notes: "There will always be those whose words are meritorious (that is, important, worth listening to, authoritative, illuminating) simply by virtue of the position they occupy in the institution... merit is inseparable from the structure of the profession and therefore the fact that someone occupies a certain position in that structure cannot be irrelevant to the assessment of what he or she produces" (167).

The institutional halo effect in an intellectual status market where letterhead may announce a scholar of manners and merit prompts the question: what role can the requirement to declare an institutional affiliation as a preface to one's work play in the judgment of an individual's essay? Surely the absence of institutional affiliation in the Telos essay competition would not inhibit the author's "creative, fresh, and original contributions in the area of politics, philosophy, critical theory, theology, culture, and the arts." On the contrary, reading is distorted by the affiliation preface (an authoring of the author), which, like manners and money, is a filtering lens that blurs the distinction between the text and the value relations that precede the opportunity to circulate it; we are told the accepted value of the text prior to engaging it.

Although, letterhead belongs to a circuitry of valued prestige, which, like money, can stand in for one's personal qualities, the pursuit of affiliation also is the pursuit of what Max Weber called status honor, which cannot be obtained through the possession of money alone. Status privileges, for Weber (1975), result from distinct manners of lifestyle, which are produced and protected by the status group. "[S]tatus honor is normally expressed by the fact that above all else, a specific style of life is expected from all those who wish to belong to the circle" (Weber 1975: 187). Affiliation encourages conformity to the norms associated with particular knowledge regimes and carries with it the burden to project the lifestyle/knowledge according to which a particular institution achieves value. Lifestyle indicators such as education, costume, residence, and disposition – like the dividends of private high school tuition, crimson regalia, the ability to blend in at Cambridge coffee houses, and cool philanthropic accents – are earned at the discretion of the status group, rather than exchanged through the medium of money. Not everyone who possesses money necessarily possesses or can achieve status. In the academic status order, style and knowledge are conflated as affiliation; inclusion in the academic status order is realized through adherence to a particular style of life, which is achieved as one accumulates a particular stance towards knowledge. Affiliation becomes a knowledge lifestyle that functions to legitimate a particular regime of knowledge -- one of the primary tools of governing.

Academic status and the variations in power that accompany it are relayed through one's institutional affiliation, which conveys to the judges of "creative, fresh, and original contributions" that one ascribes to the "definite intellectual form" that "universities encourage" (Jacoby 2000, 232). As Pierre Bourdieu (1984b) notes:

> "There is no acknowledged master who does not recognize a master and, through him, the intellectual magistrate of the sacred college of masters who acknowledge him. In short, there is no master who does not recognize the value of the institution and its institutional values which are all rooted in the institutionalized refusal of any non-institutionalized thought, in the exaltation of academic 'reliability', that instrument of normalization which has all appearances on its side, those of learning and those of morality, although it is often only the instrument of the transformation of individual and collective limits into the choice of scientific virtuousness" (95, my emphasis).

Thought is institutionalized through programs, which institutionalize the programmed and de-institutionalize the non-programmed. (See McGurl 2009 on the Program Era.) That the Telos essay competition is "open to MA and PhD students as well as post-graduate researchers who are affiliated with an internationally recognized higher

education institution" and submissions "should indicate the author's institutional affiliation," only contributes to the "institutionalized refusal of any non-institutionalized thought."

The affiliated are the refined; they emerge from program-based canons that have shaped their view of the appropriate boundaries of knowledge organized into disciplines. Bourdieu's (1984a, b) investigations into the accumulation of symbolic, and, more specifically, academic capital demonstrate how the boundaries of academic status groups are maintained as a "reputation for academic worthiness" (96) through rituals that not only distinguish individuals, but also the institutions that provide the "social conditions of the full exercise of philosophical activity" (93). Bourdieu (1984b) observes that academic power is achieved through the transfer of reputation from "heads to clients," or from supervisor/committee chair to Ph.D. student (91). The author affiliated with an unknown university and an unknown dissertation advisor provokes a different editorial reaction than does the legacy of the editor of an important journal or the possessor of Ivy League letterhead.

In its succinct representation of status and academic capital, letterhead provides an efficient means to govern knowledge boundaries. The judgment of individual essays composed along the entire spectrum of human thought and lifestyle would require constant adjustment of one's sense of the boundaries that govern legitimate knowledge. The transaction costs involved in organic interaction with individuals refined with a set of governing tools that differ from one's own are huge: wide variations in origination structure writing style, language, canon, ontological and epistemological assumptions, as well as one's investment in the present and therefore one's willingness to challenge existing thought. In their request for institutional affiliation, the panel of judges for the Telos essay competition has bypassed the judgment of these variations in meaning altogether and outsourced the preliminary screening of the entrants to standardized tests and the admissions offices of the authors' undergraduate institution, which have substantial influence in the trajectory of academic careers. Urgo (1999) recounts how when completing his undergraduate admissions application he listed his father's occupation as machinist and job title as "Joe," which "resulted in my application being discussed around the office and probably contributed more than anything in it to my acceptance. This is a story about class... the pedigree produced by one's education becomes a part of one's identity that is more indelible than one's name" (14).

In excluding the unaffiliated, the Telos competition excludes those who have not successfully conformed to a valorized way of relating to the world. With every request for documentation of origination, one is reminded of their class status and their value in the intellectual market place. Signs of affiliation are embedded in more than the author's name and letterhead. Every entrant may be equal up until the point that their institutional affiliation is announced, but once one reveals their affiliation, one risks revealing a basis for dismissal. To require that an author announce their affiliation is also to require that an author indicate how much power they may potentially exercise over those who judge their work, leaving some feeling powerless. Those with very little academic capital hesitate before writing a scathing review of even poorly written work that emerges from a status order to which they aspire. The author need not explicitly assert her right to privileged consideration of the power she posses by virtue of her relations; she need only demonstrate affiliation with a privileged status group. As Luke (1999) notes: "In the argot of the profession, these disciplinary appraisals are folded into a series of nominative judgments about the power, size, recognition or circulation of authorial presence, or, more colloquially, 'name.' Is one 'a name' to be reckoned with?" (358).

The rituals of academia help "to generate all sorts of acts of obligatory recognition and homage (among which, servile references and reviews are only the most visible) through the effects of authority operated by any legitimate institution, and through the conscious or unconscious deference paid to those people who wield power over coveted positions" (Bourdieu 1984b: 104). The attempts to extract value from one's affiliations, or to achieve more valuable affiliations, "hardly encourage heretical breaks with the artfully intertwined knowledge and power of academic orthodoxy" (Bourdieu 1984b: 105). Faced with these power relations, graduate students are encouraged to calculate maximum return on their investment. As Bourdieu (1984b) explains, "We cannot entirely understand the phenomena of the concentration of academic power without also taking into consideration the contribution made by the claimants, by way of the strategies which lead them towards the most powerful protectors" (91).

The identification of powerful protectors and the most highly-valued affiliation is facilitated by rankings. As Luke (1999) observed, "the ranking system of professional correctness that assays 'where' one's work is done also defines 'how' rewards are or are not allocated, 'when' promotions do or do not occur, 'why' status rises or falls, 'who' wins or loses" (350). The Political Theory and Public Law Job Market Blog (2011) for "prospective grad students in political theory/philosophy to ask questions about different programs, different specializations, and anything else that might come to mind" is dominated by concern with these "arithmetical economies of professional correctness" (Luke 1999: 350).

**Anonymous said...**

9:11, see the advice given above - you are not asking the right question. You should be asking, "I have a specific interest in Scottish Enlightenment - which top 10 program should I go to?" Start with the criteria of a strong general education in political theory and a program with a good placement record. Unless you can afford to invest 7 years of your life for a degree that does not lead to a job, do not even think about a program that does not have a strong placement record. That doesn't mean one star student who happened to land a great job -- they need to have a consistent record of placing students, year in and year out. That narrows you down to the top 10 programs. Then you can select which of those programs might have someone who could supervise a dissertation on the Scottish Enlightenment. Maybe apply to one or two other borderline programs with strength in your area. Georgetown might make your list at the very bottom, but you should be thinking primarily about programs like Harvard, Princeton, and Chicago.

11:00 AM, July 19, 2009

**Anonymous said...**

The signal that you're being sent by being admitted to a top program is that some pretty smart & experienced people think you have a shot. (This, by the way, is another reason why attending a "top" program is important; since the opposite signal is being sent if you *don't* get admitted to one of those programs. It's an imperfect signal, obviously, but a signal nonetheless)...

12:48 PM, July 20, 2009

The potential Ph.D. student is well-advised, if not for their personal esteem and creative expression, for a career in an academy in which affiliation dominates authorship. Top-ten letterhead will serve her well if she hopes to enter the Telos competition, and also if she hopes to present a paper at the American Political Science Association conference, which in 2008 required applicants to indicate where they earned their Ph.D. when submitting a proposal. In the crowd of authors attempting to demonstrate their merit, letterhead becomes the most efficient way to convey one's status in order to instigate what public administration scholars call "bureaucratic discretion." As Timothy W. Luke (1999) notes: "Without any other stable measure of value, the systems of continuous normalizing judgment typically use obvious indicators of status, like institutional location or professional position, to measure worth" (350). These status indicators relayed through affiliation transfer a series of judgments made prior to the judgment of the author's actual essay, ensuring that an essay produced by an unaffiliated author is not declared legitimate or valuable; knowledge of an author's affiliation simultaneously protects its judge from the risk of alienating an author's powerful "protectors" who protect the status of those whose names they have invested in.

With so many invested in the truth-value of these ranking regimes (Luke 1999: 350), the success of lower-ranked winners causes distress for higher-ranked losers.

**Anonymous said...**

Va Tech hired Chad Lavin (Penn State PhD)

11:19 AM, April 01, 2008

**Anonymous said...**

Re: 8:19--either that is a hilarious April Fool's Joke, or the idea that pedigree matters is thrown right out the window. I have no idea who Chad Lavin is, and I am sure he is an excellent political theorist; that is not the funny part. Nor am I discounting the quality of those theorists left at Penn State, that is not what is making me laugh either. Just noticing the irony of a candidate from a school that wants to rid itself of theory producing a candidate who lands a really good job. So much for the letter from the Foundations people. That said, if this is true and not an April Fool's joke, congratulations to Lavin and I wish you the best of luck.

2:52 PM, April 01, 2008

**Anonymous said...**

not really...a Penn State PhD going to V Tech makes sense...
its not like a VT PhD going to Princeton or Chicago.

3:05 PM, April 01, 2008
(Political Theory and Public Law Job Market Blog, 2011).

The idea that Lavin could have value independent of his Ph.D. affiliation is so discomforting that it is said to be the equivalent of an April fool's joke. Anonymous 2:52 PM vents a thinly-veiled contempt for those who transgress prestige-based entitlements: "the idea that pedigree matters is thrown right out the window." Rather than challenging the politics of pedigree, in his or her response, Anonymous 2:52 PM argues not that pedigree is a poor indicator of value, but that Penn State and Virginia Tech are of the same value in the institutional market place, yet still of less value than Princeton or Chicago. Anonymous 2:52 PM and Anonymous 3:05 PM seem troubled by their apparent miscalculation of the weight of reputation in the "economic calculus of the academic career" (Agger 1990). Individuals do occasionally transcend their station, often because powerful committees and editors, of which Telos founder Paul Piccone was one, take it upon themselves to disrupt this status order. Someone interacted with and valued Lavin as an individual; someone did not trust institutional affiliation as an indicator of value. The unease that is unleashed by this disruption of the status order is a discomfort with the fact that Lavin's hire betrays the idea that one's affiliation status is an indicator of one's merit: it devalues affiliation and in doing so challenges those whom Luke (1999) identified as "academic political scientists [who] clutch their journal placements, publishing houses, editorial posts, citation counts, granting agencies, and department affiliations as the tangible markers of predestined significance and well-deserved success" (356).

To directly challenge Lavin's merit independent of his affiliation would also challenge the value of affiliation, which relies upon the myth that affiliation is an indicator of merit. Anonymous 2:52 PM is careful to note that, although he has no idea who Chad Lavin is, "I am sure he is an excellent political theorist." Exchanges of affiliation value are unique in that status relies upon one not being able to make a direct trade of money for affiliation. Jean Baudrillard (1981) argued: "In consumption generally, economic exchange value (money) is converted into sign exchange value (prestige, etc.); but this operation is still sustained by the alibi of use value" (112). In academia, the alibi for the sign value of affiliation is merit. As with Weber's understanding of status, the assumption is that, although one may convert money into an education, one cannot only convert money into an education. Those who convert money into an education are also said to have merit, which is achieved through a particular knowledge lifestyle; one cannot exchange money for affiliation without also having a claim merit. However, this is complicated by the fact that affiliation often stands in for merit. Affiliation serves as an alibi for merit and merit as an alibi for affiliation. This reciprocal alibi is reinforced by the occasional film celebrating stories such as a Harvard graduate student falling in love with a brilliant MIT janitor who, in spite of his lifestyle, is embraced by the academy because he solves math problems while mopping the floor on the night shift. The fairytale myth of merit triumphing over lifestyle preserves the status value of affiliation in an "equal opportunity" society.

Widespread belief in the merit alibi is critical to the legitimacy of knowledge regimes and the stability of what Foucault (1980) discussed as a political economy of truth "centered on the form of scientific discourse and the institutions which produce it..." (131). Like status, merit cannot be claimed independent of recognition by the profession. Anonymous 2:52 PM must ascribe merit to Lavin because to do otherwise would be to imply that merit is not the source of pedigreed privilege: prestige relies upon the myth of merit. However, as Fish (1989) notes, merit "rather than being a quality that can be identified independently of professional or institutional conditions, is a product of those conditions; and, moreover, since those conditions are not stable but change continually, the shape of what will be recognized as meritorious is always changing too" (166). Merit, like author and affiliation, is "characteristic of the mode of existence, circulation, and functioning within a society" (211).

In the same way that government imposes a politics-administration dichotomy (Waldo 1948) and positivism imposes a politics-science dichotomy (Agger 1989), academia imposes a politics-merit dichotomy. This claim to inclusiveness by way of apolitical standards of exclusion is what makes the merit alibi so difficult for the outsider to challenge. Merit, as Fish (1989) argues, is rarely defined beyond what it is not: bias. Furthermore, when lower-ranked individuals challenge prestige-based merit this only magnifies the fact that they do not have it and those who do have it point to such challenges as evidence for why one does not deserve it. Terry Caesar (1992), who is a good example of an intellectual with more merit than affiliation prestige, points out how such challenges are "relegated to a species of protest" of a foolish sort (151). Were an entrant to the Telos competition to compose a cover letter like that composed by Caesar (1989) when inquiring into a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship there is little doubt that the judges of its "merit" would wonder whether or not her dissertation chair had reviewed her materials: "To be quite blunt about it: what are the chances of someone who applies from an institution with the above letterhead actually being awarded a fellowship? Just about nil, I'd say. You know it. I know it. Now you know I know it. But you're not going to tell me you know it in a written statement. Fair enough. You will want to tell me instead about pluralistic aims, humanistic goals, fair practices, and so on" (151). The practices that Caesar points to characterize most institutions that engage in governing through grant-making based on "the merit" of proposals. As INCITE! Women of Color

Against Violence (2007) put it, "the revolution will not be funded."

The politics of merit can be synthesized within the affiliation function in order to uncover how the request for institutional affiliation in the practice of publishing governs knowledge. Academic authors produce knowledge, which achieves value through publication/circulation. The status of academic author is constituted through institutional affiliation. Institutional affiliation carries with it a particular orientation towards the world, rendered in the knowledge lifestyle of the status order. The status order and associated institutionalized thought are transmitted through the refinement of Ph.D. students, who practice these rituals in order to achieve the status of author, without which they cannot participate in academic discourse. Thus, the production of knowledge is governed as status, protected by the merit alibi, becomes the basis for the legitimacy of the text. Within this regime, affiliation represents one's possession of academic capital, indicating not only the power that one possesses, but also the value that can be extracted from the entrant should their essay be chosen for display. At the same time, one accumulates more academic power as one accumulates more publications, which, as the Telos competition indicates, are more readily accumulated by those who possess institutional affiliation.

## Collectors and Academic Status Displays

> People who are refined visit other refined people and confide in them, chattering and babbling about precisely what they have experienced and whether they found the experience indigestible or pleasing.
>
> — Robert Walser, Microscript 215

The quest to extract value from affiliation redirects critical creative energies into the frantic collection and display of academic status portfolios. Making their way through conference hotels and social networking sites, junior academics discuss themselves as designer commodities in the academic marketplace; most will inform others of their institutional affiliation and status adornments within five minutes of meeting them and those with the most highly-ranked affiliation leave the least amount of time for a new acquaintance to know them as someone other than whom they are affiliated with. Some forgo their own voice altogether and instead wear their institutional affiliation on their breasts so that the newly made acquaintance knows them prior to their speaking at all: casual sweatshirts emblazoned with university logos announce with a seeming aloofness the formality of one's education. With their affiliation established, they go on to demonstrate their refined taste, voicing their displeasure at discovering that they were at a panel where a "nobody" spoke and the pleasure that they took in hearing a "someone." These displays reveal a fear of being known as oneself prior to being known according to one's institutional affiliation and thus a fear of being deprived the advantages of their status group.

If we understand the art auction as the collection of affiliations and the art lover as a collector, Baudrillard's (1981) analysis of the art lover can be extended to these collectors of academic status:

> "The singularity that he asserts – that fetishist passion for the object lived as an elective affinity – is established on his recognition as a peer, by virtue of a competitive act, in a community of the privileged. He is the equal of the canvas itself, whose unique value resides in the relation of parity, of statutory privilege, which, as a sign, it maintains with the other terms of the limited corpus of paintings. Hence the 'elitist' affinity between the amateur and the canvas that psychologically connotes the very sort of value, of exchange and of aristocratic social relation that is instituted by the auction. The passion of the amateur is ignited by the latent summation, by the exalting and continual obsession of all other amateurs, just as the fetishized value of the canvas, his mana is made from: its differential reference to all the other canvases in the same sublime sphere of status; its pedigree, its genealogy, that is, its signature and the cycle of its successive owners... (118).

The possessor of institutional affiliation imagines himself the equal of the institution itself, valued through the appearance of parity that results from the possession of one of a limited number of positions in a valued collection. As they pursue status through the collection of affiliations that might generate the appearance of parity and obsession of the unaffiliated amateurs, academics convert "knowledge as a universal value into knowledge as a sign value, as a title of nobility, is accompanied by the same legitimation, the same discrimination of the peers who participate in the white mass, in this sacrament." (Baudrillard 1981: 122). Through the collection of affiliations, one transforms their investment in a highly-valued knowledge lifestyle into a status portfolio, as Luke (1999) describes: "the placement of articles and books become the blue book on one's career or the means for assaying the placement of one's labor in departments, between different universities, or within the discipline itself..." (350).

Signs of affiliation are no longer limited to letterhead, crest-bearing sweatshirts, and conference badges. In the wake of blogs, Twitter, and Facebook, new status markets have emerged in spaces such as Academia.edu -- the "Facebook of academia" -- which distinguishes "academic" chatter as being somehow more refined than that of the general public. While most Americans who benefit from class-based privilege have become sophisticated in the practice of upholding the myth of a "classless society," with its merit alibi the academy still finds it appropriate to outwardly display and celebrate class markers in spaces such as academia.edu, which remains a status-bearing "network" organized by institutional affiliations and hierarchy, with faculty members, post-docs, and graduate students arranged in organizational charts according to their status.
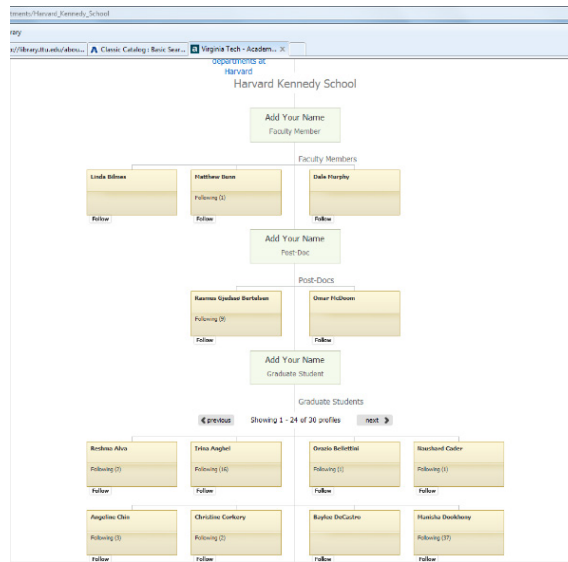


(Academia.edu 2011)

The replication of academic status displays involving affiliation and rank within a networking site should come as no surprise; "space embodies social relationships" (Lefebvre 1991: 26; see Crampton 2003).

While academia.edu promotes itself as a space within which academics can share their work and follow the work of others, as Baudrillard (1981) observed of the academic conference, it entails an exchange of signs that has more to do with value fetishes than it does with the substantive discussion of ideas. As Jeffery Di Leo (2003) observed: "Affiliation with star scholars has become fetishized in academic culture" (2). Di Leo (2003) describes how universities "striving to improve their reputations are willing to extend unprecedented amounts of financial capital in order to entice scholars whose affiliation with their university may increase their reputation... The star scholar's affiliation confers value on the institution by virtue of the prestige associated with his or her name... The hiring of star professors becomes a marketing campaign conducted for short-term visibility" (2-3). While hiring may be limited to universities, in academia.edu anyone can "follow" star scholars.

In addition to institutional affiliations and the affinities that they afford, the "followed" and their "followers" can display their photo, research interests, CV, public talks, books, papers, status updates, and their "relationships," which are established through the act of "following" the work of others. These supposedly non-institutionalized affiliations offer a black market of veneered self-rankings and the remote possibility that one might take on and affinity-based status of those whom one "follows," and thus generate a "following" made up of other amateurs. This highly professionalized and disciplined display involves what Luke (1999) described as the drawing of comparisons "between oneself and others to build these disciplined nomenklaturas, in turn, leads to regimes of classification to appraise relative visibility, professional reputation, or academic impact..." (358). Like the art auction, academia.edu is a "sublime sphere of status" offering the opportunity to live out a fantasy of "links" to academic nobility, to enter into the community of the privileged, to create an affinity between oneself and elite intellectuals whom one follows obsessively, extracting status through the assertion of parity.

In the same way that Baudrillard's art lover displays obsession with the pedigree and genealogy of artists'

paintings, affiliation collector Josh Dever's (2011) blog, "The Philosophy Family Tree," displays obsession with the pedigree and genealogy of academics' curriculum vitae. While certainly it is enriching when attempting to know someone to learn what ideas influenced them, what their favorite books might have been, or what they were reading at a particular point in time, these personal communications are absent from Dever's project, which implies that the value of an author's work, like the value of an artist's painting, cannot be determined without authentication of its origins. Everyone must be known, taken account of, and positioned within the hierarchy of signs in order to assign author-value. With the feverishness of a nineteenth century colonial missionary, Dever sponsors "orphans of the week" in public appeals for contributions to his attempt to trace the affinities of philosophers without parents: "Black was influenced by Russell, Wittgenstein, Moore, and Ramsey while an undergraduate at Cambridge, but he received a doctorate from the University of London in 1939, so I'd like to find his advisor for that degree to use for his parentage. Anyone know anything useful?" (Dever 2011: Thursday, July 21, 2005). Like the academic conference and academia.edu, this exchange of signs has little to do with the exchange of knowledge and more to do with securing the boundaries of the status order, which Dever takes pleasure in governing.

While they are populated by status displays, it also may be that spaces such as academia.edu represent attempts to find a personal connection in a career dominated by institutional affiliation and leaving little opportunity to know an author independent of their affiliation. Academic conference hallways are crowded with badge gazers who do not look you in the eye, but look you in name badge, awkwardly squinting to see the institutional affiliation listed below your name before calculating your value. One such badge gazer wasted nearly a minute in conversation with me before realizing that UTA was the University of Texas at Arlington, not the University of Texas at Austin, and abruptly turning away mid-sentence, anxious that time might be wasted interacting with an individual from whom nothing could be gained. This behavior curiously reveals a lack of trust in one's own judgment and the value of one's own thought. "Victims of their elite status, these deserving, but miraculously lucky, 'survivors', present a curious mixture of arrogance and inadequacy which immediately strikes the foreign observer..." (Bourdieu 1984b: 100).

To interact according to affiliation rather than according to one's own judgment reveals a fear of appearing as though one has not been properly refined and does not know the rules. Caesar (2000) recounts his observation of a transgression of unspoken conference norms by an outsider, noting that conference attendees "are expected to stay respectful about the dynamics of what the badge of each one proclaims: institutional affiliation... Does it matter in some specific way where the protestor was from? My feeling is that it does. But in any case the scandal is that it didn't appear to matter to him" (60). Status seekers avoid affinity with such persons, as though their ranking might be contagious. Urgo (1999) tells of one such avoidance: "We were at a conference dinner and the conversation turned to complaints about the burdens of graduate instruction. I turned to this person and made a polite remark of affinity since neither of our institutions had a graduate program. The look on his face at the prospect of being in my boat could have stopped a clock" (9). Moments like this point to the personal stress involved in publically upholding the myth of merit upon which the affiliation function relies. The result is often a self-fulfilling prophecy: it is difficult to make dinner conversation with someone whose mind is consumed with mastering a new place setting. Under these sorts of pressures, many academics wrongly internalize their "rank" as an accurate measure of their value, even as they attempt to demonstrate the manners of the highly-ranked, who, already possessing it, voice disregard for the value of such measures. It is a lot for one mind to manage. As Luke (1999) notes: "Many will dismiss such rankings in public as philistine... in private they admit such rankings are used to generate real differences and allocate various rewards. In them, dark tales of scholarly self-affirmation create and then (re)valorize professional notions of significance out of signs of apparent status" (356).

Away from conference dinner tables, the anonymity of the job blogs provides an opportunity for the unrefined "learn the secrets success" of without the risk of revealing one's status as a lowly-ranked status-gazer: anyone who has to ask does not have it. Even in their anonymity, the job blogs exhibit the "exalting and continual obsession of all other amateurs..." and a fixation with how the affiliation will be valued in the job market:

**Anonymous said...**

I see no downside at all to publishing as a grad student, as long as the articles are well placed. In fact, if you are PhD from a non-Harvard/Princeton/Chicago/etc. program, you damn well better. I doubt the ND candidates would have a a shot at a tenure track job without strong publications, no matter how good their work might be in some objective way. Look at this year and where the current ND candidates have published (from the dept. website; I know none of these people):

Cherry: AJPS, HPT

Church: JOP, HPT, Interpretations

Cohen de Lara: Polis, Acta Politica

Thunder: AJPS, PS

I've read the Thunder AJPS piece and the Church JOP piece; both are excellent. I just don't believe for a second someone with a record like Church, for example, would just now be getting a visiting position if they were coming from Princeton. Or that Thunder would be unemployed if he came from Harvard.

In short, if you are a strong theorist from a good program that can't place people based on adviser networks and reputation alone, PUBLISH. If you don't you won't get work, since your file won't get reviewed and your writing samples won't be read without that outside credibility. The placements this year seem to support that advice, by the way. Lots of jobs went to PhD's from non-elite programs with decent publications.

7:01 PM, May 01, 2008

**Anonymous said...**

What I don't understand is that ND is considered a top ten program (or at least was in the most recent rankings)...

9:21 AM, May 02, 2008

**Anonymous said...**

As many others have said, it's hard to rank 10 as there are many programs that have strengths. Some were ranked some weren't, but theorists recognize - I think - that ND is a good place.

Many of the people who got jobs had no pubs, so it may help but it certainly isn't the magic wand people are pretending. The market is more bingo-like than suggested. 10:48 AM, May 02, 2008

**Anonymous said...**

but were any of those who got jobs with no pubs coming from non-top 5 programs? that is the operative question, is it not?

11:51 AM, May 02, 2008

**Anonymous said...**

The wiki is down, but the answer is yes many people from non-top 5 places got jobs with zero refereed articles. About 129 of them were from Minnesota.

12:26 PM, May 02, 2008

**Anonymous said...**

...If you want to define elite as top 3 or 5, then okay, but that seems extremely narrow. If you say top ten or top 15, then no there are only three or so jobs going to those people.

Minnesota is elite, ND is elite, Cornell is probably elite.

The TT hires from the past few years show a clear pattern: go to a top 10 program, unless you have non-academic options that you could fall back on if you don't get a job... 6:34 PM, May 02, 2008

**Anonymous said...**

If all those places count as elite programs, then virtually everyone who got a job is from an elite school and the purported distinction (between needing pubs if you aren't coming from a top school and not if you are) is meaningless.[Cornell is elite? Really??] 6:53 PM, May 02, 2008

(Political Theory and Public Law Job Market Blog, 2011).

This dialogue between "no ones" is dominated by an uncertainty concerning how to determine value in order to participate in the auction and a search for clues to how one can most effectively demonstrate affinity with valued institutions. The focus returns again and again to how one determines which characteristics are most valued: how

much is my canvas worth? How much are my peers' canvasses worth compared to mine? Which canvases are going at the highest rate?

Anonymity also provides an outlet for those who yearn to exercise their bragging rights without appearing overexcited about their elite status; only a no one would insist that they are a someone. While those who have collected prestigious affiliations may harbor an urge to display their status, this urge must be suppressed in order to sustain the myth of affiliation as a reward for merit, rather than appearing to be something pursued for its sign value. One learns to replace the obvious "I went to Harvard" with the more casual "This scone reminds me of a café in Cambridge. I used to study there because they were open until 2 AM." The merit alibi relies upon the display of nonchalance about one's affiliation, which everyone must assume that they have earned by virtue of some special intrinsic quality. This assumption holds as long as those who have not yet achieved "it" sustain the following. Self-promotion is considered gauche by status insiders because Harvard's prestige is earned at the discretion of those who do not posses it, but who nevertheless subscribe to its reputation with little or no actual knowledge about what goes on there. "I went to Harvard" would be an admission that one's status is dependent upon the admiration of the lower-ranked; lifestyle indicators associated with Harvard casually inserted into conversation put the onus on the admirer to ask: "Did you go to Harvard?" Thus, Harvard's prestige appears to be merited, as evidenced by widespread admiration.

Only Harvard stands to gain from the energies of those trying to achieve affinity with Harvard. The lower-ranked have nothing to lose in criticizing the politics of affiliation prestige -- withholding criticism is not going to secure a lowly-ranked Ph.D. an affiliation with Harvard -- and yet it is the lower-ranked who spend their time fortifying this prestige as they contribute to the "following." It is therefore troubling that in the time spent "following pedigree" in pursuit of "prestigious" affiliation one could write multiple award-worthy entries for the Telos essay competition and yet never be considered as an author. This is not to fault those who engage in the practices of status display; I myself have done the same many times. It may be a matter of survival, but it also is a devaluation of the self that makes it difficult to write a contribution to dialogue about possible alternatives to the treatment of each other as commodities.

## The Anxieties of Academic Affiliation and Status Disqualification

> I can easily imagine that the letterhead, which was a delightful surprise, could significantly reinforce the possible effect of the document. The complete uncertainty about what the next day, even the next hour, may bring has dominated my life for weeks now... PS Please forgive the painfully complete signature: it is officially required. – Walter Benjamin to Theodore Adorno, August 2, 1940

The necessity for affiliation is a more serious problem than the academic theatre of status might suggest. There is more at stake here than award-winning essays and internationally recognized institutions, making it all the more troubling that the opportunity to write in dialogue with an intellectual community is now so far removed from individual expression and so deeply embedded in affiliation. The somewhat celebratory tone of the display of fashionable affiliations by untenured academics betrays deeply held anxieties about their ability to maintain attachment status. These anxieties are not unwarranted; more often than not, the academic career does indeed depend upon prefacing one's individual contribution with status displays accumulated through adherence to a valorized manner of ascribing validity to the affiliation function.

No junior academic who hopes to achieve tenure, including the author of this essay, desires to be unaffiliated – a position that would render their potential contributions valueless and possibly result in permanent status disqualification, which occurs when one does not obtain institutional affiliation within the first few years after earning a Ph.D. The ideal academic career path – presenting draft chapters of one's dissertation at (expensive) conferences, being nominated by one's advisor for a "best student conference paper" award, winning an essay contest, publishing a peer-reviewed paper in a highly-ranked journal, entering the job market as an "ABD," defending one's dissertation in May in order to take up affiliation as an Assistant Professor in August, receiving a course release in order to have time to publish one's dissertation work, securing grant funding, and applying for early tenure– is also the normal career path and deviations, such as a year of unemployment, reduce one's academic capital. There is no time for deviation. As Bourdieu (1984a) explains,

> "the structure of the field is perceived by the agents in the form of an ideal career – from the Ecole Normale to the Institute, passing through the stages of assistant lecturer and then a chair at the Sorbonne – against which all other trajectories are obviously measured... It is this very order which threatens the celeritas of those who want to 'cut corners' (for example, by

importing into the university field properties or powers acquired on other terrains), as against gravitas, of reliability (in writing a thesis, for instance) and which is really the most authentic proof of obsequium, unconditional respect for the fundamental principles of the established order" (87).

Just as Lavin's hire at Virginia Tech, which was portrayed as success in spite of the status order, caused a sense of disorder, to depart from the normal career path and also succeed would be a tacit challenge to the principles of the established order, which ensures that only the normal knowledge lifestyle is legitimated and sought after.

When Marc Bousquet (2002) observed that "degree holding no longer represents control over who may practice. Indeed, the inescapable observation must be this: under casualization, degree holding increasingly represents a disqualification from practice" (87) he pointed to the void that one enters between the Ph.D. program (at which point one possesses affiliation) and the job market for those who do not secure a new affiliation before they graduate. This void not only disqualifies one from teaching positions associated with their Ph.D. program, as Bousquet observes, but also often disqualifies one as a candidate for tenure-track jobs. Any distance from affiliation for any period of time brands one as unfit to return. As anonymous 12:48 PM relayed, "This, by the way, is another reason why attending a 'top' program is important; since the opposite signal is being sent if you *don't* get admitted to one of those programs" (Political Theory and Public Law Job Market Blog 2009). The same signals are embedded in one's first academic job, which Urgo (1999) describes as a defining moment: "The job one lands is definitional... Far from filling a position, the candidate is filled by it... like paternity, there is little one can do about it once it's done. One is a loose fish for only so long after the Ph.D., then it's either get caught somewhere or disappear into the icy waters of independent scholarship" (19). Icy because non-affiliation is more often than not received as a signal that something was wrong with you: why would we associate with, let alone hire, someone whom our peers did not value? This is an amateur's evaluation of an artist, relying on the suggested value of the opening bid rather than trusting one's own judgment of value.

As they participate in this circuitry of value, academics pursuing the normal path of the academic career become complicit in the casualization of the university. Faculty members, encouraged by the university to accumulate prestigious grants, earn teaching "buy out." The grant-maker, who typically funds only affiliated individuals who posses prestigious letterhead (Caesar 1992), pays for someone else to teach in the vacated classrooms while the grant recipient pursues -- and contributes affiliation value to -- the grant-maker's objectives. This exchange allows faculty members to collect affiliation with prestigious foundations without abandoning their affiliation with the university, while the university capitalizes on the sign value that they extract when their faculty members achieve more value.

The casualization of academic labor by the university is at least partially explained by this casualization of the university by academic labor. Entire careers are structured by those who act as placeholders for an elite cohort of affiliation collectors. These sublet affiliations secure a primary affiliation (a tenure track job) for faculty members while they accumulate more affiliation power (a post-doc at Stanford, a visiting position at Harvard, monetary recognition by a prestigious foundation endowed by high society philanthropists), which they can later trade in for affiliation at a more prestigious university. For many, the tenure track job has become a temporary input in the curriculum vitae of a whole class of status climbers. While those who already possess affiliation are empowered to be "absent" from universities seeking to increase their rank via travelling academics who "take a break" from their jobs in order to achieve affinity with higher-ranked universities and potential donors to the university endowment, those still seeking permanent affiliation sublet the vacated affiliation status as "visitors" in the hopes that they might delay the disqualification that results from "a break" in affiliation. This practice borders on an elaborate arbitrage scheme involving affiliation arbitragers guaranteed a status gain – which is achieved by holding two risk-free positions at once -- while others bear the risks of absent graduate supervisors, courses without instructors, and lives placed on hold by temporary contracts.

Given the limited amount of time that one has to successfully navigate this normal path, it is unsurprising that the anxiety anonymously expressed by academics seeking affiliation and letterhead is characterized by painful uncertainty.

HEREWEGOAGAIN: Soooooo, anyone ready to jump off the building yet? Oct 21, 2010

RERUN: I'm still in the stress vomiting stage. But stay tuned Oct 21, 2010

ABC123: Yeah I'm on edge. Oct 21, 2010

YEP: ugh, getting there. Oct 25, 2010

HEREWEGOAGAIN: I am really starting to freak out. I know it is early (that's what I keep telling myself at least), but I am going nuts. Oct 25, 2010

RERUN: I assume from your pseudonym that this is (at least) your second time on the market? It's my second round, and I am so much more stressed out than last year. I was pretty confident last year, but as time went on and nothing I began applying for jobs that were't really realistic given my life constraints, and I wound up turning down my only offer. THis year I'm starting off completely crazed. Oct 25, 2010

HEREWEGOAGAIN: Yep, this is my second year too. Pretty much the same thing happened to me last year...didn't hear anything at first, freaked out and starting applying tp places that didn't make any sense for me, turned down a couple of interviews. Did an on campus interview at a place I LOVED but didn't get the offer. This year I am a total mess. The fact that I have no hits so far is not helping matters any. Oct 26, 2010

RANT: Fuck inside hires. That is all. Oct 26, 2010...

GUEST: If applying for a job seems so stressful, how will you cope with the pressure-filled years of working toward tenure, developing course preparations, negotiating through department culture, and so forth? Oct 26, 2010

HEREWEGOAGAIN: I tried to make that same point last year and got my head torn off by a whole bunch of people on here. I don't think it is a bad point; this is a stressful line of work all the way around. I am actually in a TT position right now (looking to move to a place that better fits my talents), and I can say that "looking for job" stress and "on the job" stress are pretty different. I am not saying that one is better or worse than the other, but just because you find the job hunt extremely stressful doesn't mean you will be overwhelmed by the job. Apples and oranges. Oct 26, 2010

RERUN: Applying isn't stressful. Not having a job is stressful. Last year I couldn't understand what everyone was all worked up about until the end of November when I had no bites yet. And if you knew anything about me and my life beyond what's posted on this board, I doubt you'd be so patronizing. Oct 26, 2010

TICK, TICK, TICK: my rant of the day: almost everyone on the market in my dept has now heard from somewhere (or several places) and i have not heard anything yet! i know it is early etc but it is making me panicky. this is my THIRD (and last?) time so i need something to come through! Oct 26, 2010

SUPPORT: it's really early. just look at the long list of schools hiring on the wiki, and the short list that has contacted candidates!!! Oct 26, 2010

OBSERVER: I'd feel stressed too if I were the only one in my comparison group to not have a glimmer of interest shown yet... Oct 26, 2010.

Soc. Rumor Mill 2010-2011 (2011)

The subjectivities projected in these noms de plum only reinforce outsider status as something to be avoided. To be unaffiliated is described in terms of expiration dates, rants against insiders, observer rather than participant status, the need for a support group, and a remedial track of repetition. This characterization of outsider status reveals how, in the process of getting inside, one gradually pushes aside alternative subjectivities, such "critic." The author function manifests in the academic profession not only in its construction of the boundary of legitimate knowledge, but, as this boundary is lived out in the careers of academics, it also manifests in the production of this affiliation subjectivity. It matters, Jacoby (2000) argues, "whether intellectuals obsess about a single editor who judges their work or three 'referees,' ten colleagues, several committees, and various deans. Universities encourage a definite intellectual form. They do not shoot, they simply do not hire those who are unable or unwilling to fit in" (232).

Perhaps due to job market anxiety or perhaps due to the relationship between one's success and one's internalization of "normal," even in an anonymous forum anxiety about the job market is reframed as an inability to cope: "If applying for a job seems so stressful, how will you cope with the pressure-filled years of working toward tenure, developing course preparations, negotiating through department culture, and so forth?" The suggestion that anyone of merit should be able to cope is also the reinforcement of the myth that it is not academic life that is flawed, but the individuals who "cannot cope" with it (Nickel and Eikenberry 2006). In fact, many successful academics are not coping well at all, but feel pressured, whether by the pressures for affiliation or by anonymous "guests" on blogs, to project the appearance that everything is okay (Nickel 2008).

These scenes of desperation reveal a growing awareness that one's success in academia has little to do with one's effort or talent, but instead involves a series of wagers in which one must balance the risk of a poorly-made investment with the possibility of hitting the affiliation jackpot. It probably is true that not every Ph.D. on the job

market "merits" employment by an academic institution and not everyone who seeks one will secure an academic position. However, the boundaries constituted by the affiliation function will exclude many who are capable of making significant contributions and include many who are capable only of making significant displays of status on their way to the next rung in the status hierarchy. When "public universities have cut costs largely by freezing hiring for vacant staff and adjunct faculty positions, deferring maintenance costs, and collapsing courses to create fewer, but larger course sections..." (Kelderman 2009) a gap in employment does not necessarily reflect the abilities of academics who do not "cope" well or who do not secure one of the few jobs available. Surely someone who does not secure an institutional appointment in these circumstances should not be rendered a "no one" and denied the opportunity to be considered in the judgment of "creative, fresh, and original contributions in the area of politics, philosophy, critical theory, theology, culture, and the arts."

## Conclusion

At a time when successful participation in society could not be divorced from one's pedigree, Charles Dickens' "man from Somewhere" was forced to conceal his affiliations in order to discern the character of those with whom he hoped to enter into personal, rather than status-based, relations, resulting in great confusion and intrigue. "We are all very much interested in the man from Somewhere... Deeply interested! Quite excited! Dramatic! Man from Nowhere, perhaps!" In academic society today, it seems that we are similarly incapable of understanding and interacting with an individual without first having knowledge of their institutional affiliation and its rank in the status order; one's value cannot be discerned without letterhead, name badge, sweatshirt, or academia.edu family tree. Without these signs, affiliation malfunctions in the management of legitimate knowledge. This is problematic because the request for an author's affiliation preserves the practice of legitimating knowledge according to existing value relations. Knowledge circulating in this way inhibits rather than facilitates the emergence of "creative, fresh, and original contributions in the area of politics, philosophy, critical theory, theology, culture, and the arts."

This is not to argue against institutional affiliation or against the universities that provide it. Institutional affiliation is valuable; it provides mentors, colleagues, research resources, students, community, spontaneous dialogue, tenure, and, often, just a needed distraction. Universities are important institutions and many of the norms that historically they have guarded are essential elements of any society that hopes to cultivate critical thought. These valuable relations are at risk when the "affiliation necessity" acts as a qualifying characteristic of the author and as an ordering principle of a "normal" academic career that is increasingly dominated by the "production necessity." Much of the activity that junior academics engage in serves no purpose other than to achieve author status and contribute to the production of affiliation-value, distracting them from the real opportunities that universities provide, which have nothing to do with the ranking of one's letterhead.

Concern with the decline in the well-being of a cohort of recent Ph.D.s may seem maudlin. One could make the very reasonable claim that we are faced with more pressing problems than the working conditions of academics. Yet, these pressing problems are more than ever knowledge problem reinforced by the affiliation function. The requirement for "internationally recognized" institutional affiliation and the associated "opportunity to be published in one of the leading international interdisciplinary journals," exemplify an era dominated by knowledge that is given value via the author according to the symbolic value of the institutions with which it is affiliated. The affiliation function governs the possession of authority; it governs the determination of merit; it governs the boundaries of legitimate speech; it governs the placement of university logos behind "experts" invited by the media to identify the root of a crisis; it governs the distribution of resources dedicated to "transformative practices." Knowledge governs and affiliation is governing knowledge production. It therefore matters, or, at the least, it is telling of a more widespread problem, that Telos, a journal celebrated for its iconoclasm, has collapsed critique and affiliation in a competition that would exclude its founding editor and many of the now "prestigious" authors whose criticisms he published.

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# Publish or Perish: Digital Presence and Mobility as Worth

## Rick Dolphijn

## Introduction

The erosion of geography and the compression and convergence of time, place and space have been emphatically reasoned and documented in the century of the digital diaspora. Humanity connects, embeds and transports across dimensionality and context. New media, most notably the Internet and mobile devices, have re-arranged our sense(s) of private and public, work and play, social and self, in profound and unexpected ways (Licoppe 2004; Ito et al. 2005; Arminen and Weilenmann 2009). The "technologies and practices of networked mobility" (Wilken 2009: 2) have become a defining quality of modern life, offering advantages of utility and status. To meet these expectations, technologies are shaping our notions of social worth, citizenship and self-esteem. Our capacity to operate as a social broadcaster and sensor in a networked culture is prized and fettishized. Burgleman tells us that the 'myth' of communication "has even replaced 'progress' as the dominant paradigm of capitalist discourse" (Burgelman 2000: 6). Is it true that power and influence can come from almost anywhere in our new age of democratised media, but they require presence to be heard and proliferation to impact. The intersect of acceleration and mobility problematises temporal abstentions, with rhetoric of transformative speed and movement promoting a cultural devaluation of prolonged repose. Those who lack the resources, literacies or will to perform the role of transmitter are resigned to a discrete spatial and temporal territory – they are invisible and less 'effective'. This paper ponders the question: what happens to those who are not creating and socialising media, reaffirming our existence and value via tribal, commercial and commentative lenses? Does an unpublished self perish?

Amelia Potter offered us the term 'zones of silence' in 2006 as a less binary descriptor for the digital divide. As Potter explains: "Zones of silence exist within countries with little connectivity altogether, as well as within zones of high connectivity. They are the places, communities, and homes in the developed/developing worlds where — because of a lack of access to ICTs — people's voices are, effectively, outside of their immediate community, unconnected and unheard." (Potter 2006). Sherry Turkle tells us in her Alone Together thesis: "People are lonely. The network is seductive. But if we are always on, we may deny ourselves the rewards of solitude" (Turkle 2010: 3). Potter highlights the problem of being off: one can be discounted altogether. Turkle highlights the challenge of being on: distractibility and exhaustion. Humanity, of course, sits astride these antinomical poles. We must work then, as Potter suggests, to combat enforced zones of silence while protecting the right to be silent, absent or gradual. Technologically powered temporal and motile flexibility should enrich, not devalue, the freedom to be slow and still.

## Social Bodies in (Accelerated) Motion

In his expansive interrogation of The Practice of Everyday Life, Michel de Certeau invokes mass transit to describe the way people arrange and experience daily systems of meaning:

> In modern Athens, the vehicles of mass transportation are called metaphorai. To go to work or come home, one takes a

'metaphor' - a bus or a train. Stories could also take this noble name: every day, they traverse and organize places; they select and link them together; they make sentences and itineraries out of them. They are spatial trajectories (De Certeau 1984:115).

De Certeau believed our daily narratives possessed innate motion; that they are in large part travel stories constituting "geographies of actions" (1984: 155). We are undoubtedly creatures on the move and this mobility extends to the technologies we use to transport ourselves and our ideas. In 2009 the UN's International Telecommunications Union (ITU) revealed a world captivated by portability and connectivity; mobile phone adoption across the globe had surpassed four billion worldwide and is projected to reach six billion by 2013. A May 2011 report from China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology logged over 900 million mobile phone users in that country (Kan 2011). The iPhone is the metaphorai of the early 21st century.

Fluid transmission and interpretation of media and its meaning(s) is an everyday social practice for billions of humans. 'Upwardly mobile', the phrase once popularly used to describe socially successful individuals and entities, has returned in practice. But this time, 'upward' is implicit, embedded in the mobility. If one is not moving oneself or ones ideas through a network of connections, sociability, and its personal and professional rewards are at risk. Influence is being enshrined as a market. Innovators lionise porousness. 'Waterfall' institutionalism is suffering decay and an agile atomisation of commerce, content and culture is emerging as the dominant social refrain. Documenting this tilt toward insistent dynamism, socio-temporal theorists Robert Hassan and Ronald Purser note:

> The goods and services that exist in the supermarket through to the data center are part of a flowing and ever-accelerating networked, globalized life where the time of the clock no longer schedules and meters our individual and collective existence in as predictable a fashion as it once did (2007: 2).

Zygmunt Bauman's liquid modernity abounds as we embrace state(s) of being validated through rapid interfacing; constructs and rituals where networked motion is a 'principal source of strength and warrant of invincibility' (2000: 15). In their analysis of cosmopolitanism, deemed a critical aspect of our modern, globalised age, Szerszynski and Urry surmise that one of its chief characteristics is "extensive mobility, in which people have the right to 'travel' corporeally, imaginatively and virtually" (2002: 470). Jonathon Sterne and Emily Raine remind us that time is a core regulator of behaviours and interactions, orchestrating individual and collective activity and shaping relations within nuanced social networks (2006). It is the pace of real-time that governs Szerszynski and Urry's extensive mobility. Andy Greenwald describes the web as an "accelerated bubble of hypertime" (2003: 277). Our daily ICT use inhabits this accelerated bubble; a culture of 'always on' and always occupied, where "messaging is instant. Overnight delivery is slow. We measure in minutes and seconds the wait for the headline news, credit-card approval, romance and wisdom" (Gleick 1999: 286). Pausing to reflect on the accelerating gap between his own media life and that of his children, New York Times journalist Brad Stone is resigned to the fact that, "My daughter and her peers will never be 'off the grid.' And they may come to expect that stores will emanate discounts as they walk by them, and that friends can be tracked down anywhere" (2010). Stone is clearly nervous, but a rapidly capable, tethered existence need not be a negative state by default. The digitally persuasive and pervasive should, however, look closely at the fringe dwellers of our technological and temporal arrangements to interrogate and (where required) equalise the meanings and value systems they are endorsing.

## The Published Self

Publishing in the digital age, as Henry Jenkins has explored at length, is a trans-modal, multiplicitous event. No longer the linear journey between artefact and audience that characterised the mass, industrialised media age, in our molecularised media universe it is an intricate series of meditative and symbolic negotiations across and within temporal and contextual spaces. A growing proportion of these negotiations concern the digital presentation of the self and its relationship to digital selves; publishing is more personal than ever. A Lancaster University report to the UK Government in 2006 on Social networks and future mobilities records the transformation of "the average traveller from the quasi homo oeconomicus, myopic and individualistic, to a network actor, who tries to achieve his or her goals as part of a network of interacting and negotiating actors (Larsen, Urry and Axhausen 2006: 7). This same report notes that social networks are an 'accomplishment' of material and social mobility. Our tribes have

always held our power, but those tribes are now forged and worn in public. Online reputation brokers are emerging to help us negotiate the 'ambient awareness' of our social identities (Thompson 2008), while our networked world acts to transform innate social cognition to a published social esteem. As our captivation with social networking deepens and distributes, Larsen, Urry and Axhausen's 'goals' become more immersive and intimate. Paul Ricoeur teaches us that "self interpretation becomes self-esteem. In return, self-esteem follows the fate of interpretation" (Ricoeur 1992: 179). We know that self-esteem is socially shaped; that self-reflection is derived by social reflection. We also know that managing our public perception is a lifelong social process, increasingly performed and administrated in digital publics (Boyd 2008). In this material and psychological landscape of networked interdependence, our reflections are hyper-visible and bound up with others. Our conversations are sacred, the spaces in which they occur privileged; their scability and pace a basis for determining personal and social worth. A successful digital citizen is travelling through a social circuit at all times – publishing and mediating multiple connectivity channels via their personal computing device(s). Physical possession of these devices still carries socially symbolic weight (Fortunati and Cianchi 2006), however status is increasingly conferred and contested in the execution of the artefact's purpose: it is what one does with one's device that counts. A mobile phone used exclusively to receive calls may serve the needs of its master and harm none, but a shifting social temperament challenges this choice as bigger picture leeching (even if it professes not to ascribe blame to the owner). In a peer-to-peer society, cohabitation and harmony (and the worth they induce) requires reciprocity at minimum, generosity as ideal. Following this line of thought, giving and doing may be invisible and insufficient if unpublished.

Communicative acceleration, spurred by technology, is elevating personal conversation in public to dominant social and cultural discourse, and deepening our reflex to share. While our self-selective publishing of informational intimacies is an act of sharing, it is also everyday surveillance, classifying our semantic and social standing in the mediated ecosystem. (Lyon 2003) When communication is social currency and our networked, digital identities are powered by published exchanges and artefacts, there is a rising pressure to be seen (surveilled) to attain and retain social worth. Offering oneself for social tracing means dynamic negotiation and engagement of the opportunities created by new technologies to articulate the self. In a dense analysis of mobile communication and cultures around the world, Manuel Castells and colleagues found "a youth culture that finds in mobile communication an adequate form of expression and reinforcement" (Castells et al 2007: 127). This reinforcement is not limited to youth cultures. For the billions equipped with mobile self-publishing portals, definition and worth is performed and distributed in the density of one's social graph, the richness of one's artefactual contributions and the throughput they may trigger. Self-identification and verification is becoming inextricable from the networked device. Ken Jordan, Jan Hauser and Steven Foster stress the importance of this issue (and its relationship to the industries of trust and reputation):

> What should online "citizenship" mean in an era of 24/7 connectivity to a ubiquitous information infrastructure? In this new world, you will have an online identity that remains constant, allowing for continuity between your experiences in separate online environments. As in real life, when you go from one virtual social milieu to another your identity will acquire a history. But because this will take place in a digital realm, designed by code and made of data, information will be attached to your identity in ways we are only now beginning to appreciate. Who decides what that capability will be, and most important, whether it contributes or not to civil society? What will your "persistent identity" online say about you, and what shouldn't it say? (Jordan, Hauser and Foster 2003: 2).

Primed as 'hunter-gatherers of media' (Jenkins 2009), personal broadcasting (sometimes referred to as 'life-casting') is filling our media moments. Industry statistics from 2009 reveal that nearly 400 million individuals visited the world's most popular social publishing platform Facebook during one month, each spending an average of 20 minutes engaging with the site (Solis 2009). The popular of micro-blogging platforms like Twitter continues to boom. If Jenkins' transmodal negotiations and Hall's active encoding and decoding practices (1980) represent movement through personal and social narratives, identities and relationships, our networked society is stirring up a dervish of motion.

Charles Leadbeater tells us "the web will encourage us to see everyone as potential participants in creating collaborative solutions through largely self-organising networks" (2008: 5). Few would dispute the legion of catalysing opportunities this view introduces. But consider the unexercised potential of a network actor. The operative word in Leadbeater's vision is 'see'. We should be concerned with how this 'sight' is constituted. Where is it performed, transmitted and received? Who determines its visibility and (therefore) viability? What are the repercussions if we are not seen as a mobilising entity in the persuasive participatory paradigm? David Lyon suggests that online social networking, arguably the exemplar of public conversation in the Internet age, inverts the historical broadcast paradigm

and transforms individual users from "passive to active, since surveillance in this context offers opportunities to take action, seek information and communicate. Online social networking therefore illustrates that surveillance – as a mutual, empowering and subjectivity building practice – is fundamentally social" (Albrechtslund 2008). Leadbeater concedes that "the web most rewards those who are already well connected by allowing them to network together, reinforcing their privilege" (Leadbeater 2008). As Clive Thompson discovered when he spoke to young adults who had "never lived without online awareness. For them, participation isn't optional. If you don't dive in, other people will define who you are. So you constantly stream your pictures, your thoughts, your relationship status and what you're doing — right now! — if only to ensure the virtual version of you is accurate, or at least the one you want to present to the world" (Thompson 2008). To be part of the network and not be publishing (reacting, refracting) invites a social and reputational void.

In a spirited debate between web 2.0 critic Andrew Keen and author David Weinberger for the Wall Street Journal online, Weinberger lauds the virtually euphoric state of philosophical and intellectual engagement the social web has afforded him (casting the pre-web era as isolated and glacial):

> Ideas were scarce back then because space, time and the limitations of paper made it hard to hear what others were saying and well nigh impossible to talk with them about it. Today I am in contact with people who come up with ideas I'd never have encountered, who are sources of wide expertise, who squirrel away in public on tiny topics, who spew a long tail of speculations with occasional insights that are worth the wait... (Weinberger 2007).

Weinberger's assessment is not uncommon, nor is it entirely inaccurate. However, this sentiment is used to propel and propagate an occasionally naive causal narrative of the Internet era; wherein, if you acquiesce and share alike, you shall discover untold social and cultural riches. Dissecting these myths, Kym Thorne and Alexander Kouzmin surmise that "Constant, global, digital motion is everything" (Thorne and Kouzmin 2008: 2). Where then, lies stillness?

## Location, Location, Location

> Being 29,198ft above sea level is no longer an excuse for not answering. In 2007 China Telecom installed a mast near the Everest base camp (Tryhorn 2009).

Cultural geographers have shown us that space, place and time are interconnected and mutually constitutive. Throughout the history of communication technologies commentators have lauded their progressive, transcendent effect on distance. People on opposite sides of the planet could feel like they were in the same room while using the telephone. Now, they can conduct a live video chat then follow up by monitoring the other party's activities moment to moment via a life-casting application like Twitter (www.twitter.com). The magical quality conjured by early electrical wonders (Marvin 1990) is alive and well as we domesticate distance and render space immaterial. But the growing preoccupation with real-time, synchronous updates and exchange bolsters David Morley's case for the "exaggerated death of geography" (Morley 2003). Mobile technologies invite a focus on place and the moment embedded therein. How often do we start our mobile conversations by calling out our, asking and answering 'where we are' and where we are en route (Weilenmann 2003). Locally focused online communities and services are on the rise. We may have collapsed distance, but place and its circumstantial composition are becoming more, not less, important to those on the move and those monitoring our movements. Digital super-corporations like Google and Facebook have introduced much hyped, real-time, location based supplements to their services, encouraging their users to reveal more detailed geographic data, then expose that information to real-time search in the digital public. Mirroring the convergence of device and function (phones becoming mobile computing portals), the original question asked of participants on the social web - 'what are you doing' – found itself aligned to that of the mobile phone - 'where are you'? A slate of new media businesses has emerged in a short span of time to capitalise on this trend. These location based social networks require a user to 'check in' and publish their precise location to their connections (sometimes, the digital public at large). The cartographic might of Google (which is power-mapping the earth, the seas, even the solar system) and the carrying of geo-aware smart phones means that location (and superficial circumstance) is pinpointed with extreme accuracy. Some of these applications, such as Foursquare, integrate competition and reward as an addictive differentiator. If a user 'checks in' at a specific location (i.e. a popular coffee shop) with enough

frequency, that user is anointed the virtual 'mayor' of that location. This encourages participants to embed in socially desirable and conducive locations, and creates a public badge of honour (not only are they at the hippest joint in town, they are the resident kingpin). In this scenario, real world location and situation become virtual assets, tethered to digital profile and status. If we are not claiming our location then at best, we 'miss out' on the full riches of reputational schema, and at worst, it is assumed we have something to hide. As technology journalist Pete Cashmore predicted in 2009, "Soon, our whereabouts may optionally be appended to every Tweet, blog comment, photo or video we post" (Cashmore, 2009). Our coordinates have become social currency, with the value in the reveal, not the hold. Technologists like Stowe Boyd affirm a future of socio-spatial primacy: "The innate capability we have to shift in a heartbeat from a given public, and our corresponding persona, to another, is now being accelerated by streaming social tools. This will be the decade when publicy displaces privacy, online and off" (Boyd 2010).

The fettishisation of real-time and location (as a sacred marriage of context) is compounded by an appetite for user-generated content in news and commerce. We are no longer the principal stakeholder in our "networked nature of impressions" (Boyd, 2006) While advocates justly hail the equalising impact of 'real stories and real reporting from real people' (as opposed to a clinically polished, filtered company line, beholden to special interest), the demand for amateur multimedia narratives (with its tantalising promise of recognition and reputation) applies ever greater pressure to connect, embed and broadcast in the moment. Companies need consumers to co-create, shape and market their wares and will put up rewards for doing so. News organisations need non-professional content to understand trends, lure audiences and diffuse the rising costs of an unsustainable business model. As journalist and citizen media activist Dan Gilmor sees it, thanks to new media mobilities, ordinary people write the first draft of history' in a way that can be amplified and committed to record (Gilmor 2006). This produces a melting pot of micro and macro pressures to participate and publish in situ. Our personal social network expect to keep up with our movements; present and potential employers expect to see that we are viable, richly connected entities, on the move; the market insists it can serve us better if it knows more about who, when and where we are; and the newsmakers expect and encourage us to play a larger role in their historically privileged territories by virtue of our mobility. As 'wiki-nomics' champions Don Tapscott and Anthony Williams see it, "Every individual now has a role to play in the economy, and every company has a choice – commoditize or get connected" (Tapscott and Williams 2006: 31). There are exciting possibilities imbued in the arrival of the real-time, networked web, including the promise of vivid behavioural mapping and an enlightening zeitgeist that will teach us about ourselves. There will also likely be fascinating applications for scholars and researchers – as the subject of phenomenological investigation and as ethnographic tools in and of themselves. But as we chart and colonise the spaces in between our media moments, mapping and publishing our motion as we live and experience it, what happens if we press pause?

## Can Silence Keep Up?

In his rhythmanalysis, Henri Lefebvre posits that "everywhere where there is interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy, there is rhythm" (Lefebvre 1992: 15). Our networked society is defined by these rhythms. Theorists like Paul Virilio have argued that these technologically facilitated rhythms are speeding up, meaning "the time allotted to decision-making is now insufficient" (Virilio 2000: 92). When we can be relied on for reach and response in all places, at all times, what does it mean if we cannot, or do not, immediately talk back? Mobile technologies have been praised for letting us make the most of our time. The 'dead air' that existed when we travelled to and from moments and locations can now be populated with mediated, meaningful exchange. Yet, when motion and output is the predominant operative state, delay becomes inoperative. The risk here is that we confuse non-visible motion with stasis or ossification; a value judgement that ignores the motion of our inner life and mechanises us as network nodes in a macro-social web. If we are not in motion, we are broken. Repose or reflection is invisible and therefore unviable.

Our suite of silences - meditation, pause, listening and repose - serves important purposes in everyday life. It is in our downtime that we recharge, recalibrate and reflect. If we stop moving we can better survey our surrounds and our state(s); better respond to them. Put simply, as human beings, every now and then we need to take a breath, do nothing, or have a think. As Adam Jarworski affirms, "Silence is a unifying concept for tackling diverse communicative phenomena: linguistic, discoursal, literary, social, cultural, spiritual and meta-communicative" (Jaworksi 1997: 3). It is also an ageless metaphor for communication itself– a pregnant space, illuminating via its

darkness. Oral historians champion the innate value of silence as a 'non-message' compelling closer examination. Online community managers and strategists understand the demography of lurkers is laden with critical 'tells' (Preece and Nonnecke, 2003; Preece, Nonnecke and Andrews 2004). Silences and qualitatively 'silent' states can be dense sites of meaning and consequence. Yet silence in the digital age is undergoing a conceptual devaluation. The regular production of conversationally 'sticky' content is privileged as both socio-lubricant and characteristic of a worthy 21st century citizen. Publishing a trail of personally curated identity markers to enable discovery and social traction is framed as a "public good" (Joinson 2008: 2). In a geo-sensitive ecosystem that demands our engagement to function and thrive, downtime becomes unproductive to the collective, absence a handicap to be treated. Our reputations and our communities reject dead air. What then of those who cannot - or will not - testify motion through expression and self-surveillance?

The social web and mobile interfacing devices have created a "proliferation of places, technologies, and `gates' that enhance the mobilities of some while reinforcing the immobilities of others" (Sheller and Urry 2006: 213). As Nicola Green explains:

> The connection between mobile space and time, as articulated in multiple, heterogeneous places and rhythms, is not constant and does not have equal effects for all. Access to and control of time and mobility are always shaped by the context of situated social practice, as collectively created and maintained by a number of different individuals and social groups. In asking who benefits from these heterogeneous causes and effects, we are asking questions about the power geometries of mobile time (Green 2002: 291).

Disconnection and non-participation can be an act of dissent. A choice not to watch, post or download can constitute resistance (to the content itself, to the system it is contained within, or the audience it is intended for). Although this is still the case with newer media and platforms, there is a paradox looming. As self-profiling and propagation within digital commons becomes a successively larger part of our lives, non-presence is denied symbolic resonance because it of its inherent invisibility. In a real-time, location powered commons, absence is an ontological issue. The participatory paradigm is 'lean forward' versus 'lean back', "requiring more focused, concentrated, active attention" (Mackay 2005: 139). Watching television or reading a newspaper does not demand visibility or expansive social network reach. Consider journalist Howard Jacobsen's return to the 'slow browse' for The Guardian. Withholding ICTs for a week as an experiment in 'disrupted subservience', he switches off Google and heads to a library to serve his informational needs. After adjusting to a jarring difference in pace and expectation, he finds the experience is imbued with an ecstasy of potential:

> A library is to the internet what the telly of yesterday is to telly now – a palace of serendipities, where no limits are set to your curiosity, no assumptions made about your ignorance, a true democracy of the intelligence (Jacobson 2002).

Jacobson may be guilty of nostalgia, but his field test raises an important point. In the absence of our social stop-watch (in the silence of a public space that, in this instance, privileges silence) we can write our own rules and set our own pace. We can (re)claim space and time for ponderance and repose. David Levy argues this is a contemporary cultural imperative:

> ...our more–faster–better attitude, which is intimately connected with the striving for technological advance, is driving out slower practices that are essential to our ability to govern ourselves with maturity. Without adequate time to think and reflect, time to listen, and time to cultivate our humanity, and without spaces that are protected from the constant intrusion of information and noise, I do not see how we can respond to the innumerable social and political challenges of the new millennium with the quality of attention they deserve (Levy 2006: 1).

As we concern ourselves with the rituals of mediated, cumulative and traceable social engagement, we should not neglect the cultural value of the silence and the slow. For authentic community building is a slow boil activity and quality is not interchangeable with amplification.

## Swimming Like Sharks

Real travellers regularly take time to stop moving and to think instead. They occasionally consider, register, and eliminate impressions received. And of course, real travellers have a purpose and, above all, homes. If not, they

are drifters. And isn't modern communication society creating exactly that: drifters in a universe of sense (Burgelman 2000: 9).

Questions and concerns about human movement, speed and interaction in everyday life are as old as humanity. As Giuseppina Pellegrino observes, "history can be read through change, movement and displacement of people, objects and, increasingly, information, to the extent of considering modernity itself – and its globalizing face - as the product of flows, fluxes and changing landscapes" (Pellegrino 2007: 59). Stowe Boyd points to a long line of philosophers who have argued we are menaced by a 'poverty of attention', including Diderot as early as 1755 (Boyd, 2010). It is easy to neglect history when considering the relationship between speed and information. There is no need to panic, or condemn. Technology is not the death of us. But as the high priests of the social web evangelise a new era of interconnectedness, we must be careful not to exchange one flawed gate keeping model for another. A burgeoning emphasis on digital embeddedness as reputational worth and a pre-requisite for new millennial citizenship threatens to create a wilderness of detachment; an ecosystem whose inhabitants and (in)actions are off the informational radar, therefore diminished in capital and worth. Can this silent jungle imprint on an era characterised by performative exchanges in relentless motion?

According to Virilio, "The speed of light does not merely transform the world. It becomes the world" (Virilio 2000). If our connective metaphori carry, project and reflect us through a 'culture of flow' (Wilken 2009) at light speed, new lines of inquiry will become necessary to deal with the impact of selective (or imposed) non-presence. As we live our lives in real time publics, we will need to consider whether there is a real time private as well as public, if there is an unreal time, and how both are valued by popular and powerful systems of order. Silence and slowness are unlikely to evaporate. People will continue to smell roses, rest their eyes and hide under covers. Some will deftly reinvent repose, meditation and incubation within a new mediascape (call it mindfulness 2.0). But if we canonise relentless, participation via published artefact and trace signals without rewarding the slow and the analogue, we risk institutionalising a different digital divide – a zone of silence - where the unpublished self is politically cast in opposition to the quantified (Winner 1986). The ephemerality of the digital commons and its collective memory means asking these questions is even more important (Pietrzyk 2010; Frost 2003). If a social networking status update or a blog post conflates too intensively with worth and esteem, what happens when these social artefacts dissolve from our screens? As belonging is constituted in vivace, panoptical chambers we need to affirm non-peformative, silent belonging, as meaningful, memorable and viable.

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# Rejecting Academic Labor as a Subaltern Class: Learning from Paulo Freire and the Politics of Critical Pedagogy

Henry A. Giroux

While liberals, progressives, and left-oriented educators have increasingly opposed the right-wing assault on higher education, they have not done enough either theoretically or politically in connecting the issues of academic freedom, the proliferation of non-tenured and part-time faculty, and the state of critical pedagogy in the university. Although concern has been expressed about the shameless exploitation of non-tenured and part-time faculty in the United States (actually, an under-the-radar parallel alternative to the traditional tenure system), such concerns have not been linked to a full-spirited critique of the anti-democratic forces now affecting higher education through the relentless expansion of a growing managerialism and a neoliberal approach to university governance.[1]

The current labor crisis facing higher education shoul be addressed as part of a much broader assault on society by corporations, the military, right-wing foundations, and conservative religious groups. Higher education is a dangerous site because it offers the potential both for fostering critical thought and for shaping oppositional subject positions, identities, and social relations that could challenge the current neoliberal regime of ideology, politics, and economics. At the same time, it offers a space and modes of pedagogy that often unsettle many of the dominant orthodoxies and fundamentalisms that now dominate American culture. I believe that one way to challenge this military-industrial-academic complex is to make the question of pedagogy central to a reformulated politics that reclaims the university as a democratic public sphere. Pedagogy plays an important role in linking politics to matters of critical agency and social transformation. In this instance, pedagogy is integral to any discourse about academic freedom; but, more important, it might very well be the most crucial referent we have for understanding politics and defending the university as one of the few remaining democratic public spheres in North America today. As Ian Angus rightly argues, "The justification for academic freedom lies in the activity of critical thinking,"[2] and protecting critical thought must involve safeguarding the pedagogical and political conditions that make it possible.

I believe that too many notions of academic freedom are defined through a privatized or individualized notion of freedom and are largely removed from the issue of democratic governance that is the primary foundation enabling academic freedom to become a reality in the first place. Right-wing notions of teaching and learning that seek to standardize curricula, impose an audit culture, and prioritize quantitative measures constitute a kind of anti-pedagogy, substituting conformity for dialogue and ideological inflexibility for critical engagement. Such attacks on critical thought should be named for what they are—an affirmation of thoughtlessness and an antidote to the difficult process of self- and social criticism.[3] In spite of what conservatives claim, right-wing pedagogy confuses training for education and enshrines a poisonous anti-intellectualism that produces a flight from thinking, the self, society, and the obligations of social responsibility. The outcome of this bare pedagogy of conformity—emptied of critical dialogue, critique, and ethical considerations—is not a student who feels a responsibility to others, but one who feels the presence of difference and troubling knowledge as an unbearable burden to be contained or expelled. In this way, it becomes apparent that the current right-wing assault on higher education is directed not only against the conditions that make critical pedagogy possible but also against the possibility of raising questions

about the real problems facing higher education and society today, such as the increasing role of part-time labor, the instrumentalization of knowledge, the rise of an expanding national security state, the hijacking of public spheres by corporate and militarized interests, and the increasing attempts by right-wing extremists to turn education into job training and public pedagogy into an extended exercise in patriotic xenophobia. All of these efforts undermine the idea of the university as central to a functioning democracy in which people are encouraged to think, to engage knowledge critically, to make judgments, to assume responsibility for what it means to know something, and to understand the consequences of such knowledge for the world at large.

The rise of part-time labor in higher education is about both the increasing corporatization of the university and an insidious neoliberal ideology in which many groups, including students and faculty, are increasingly defined as either redundant, superfluous, or entirely disposable. As the university becomes subject to the growing politics of corporatization, the forces of privatization and contract labor have impacted on higher education in ways that suggest not only a shift in the governing structures of the university, now re-envisioned from the perspective of a new market-driven form of managerialism, but also a new formulation of faculty as a kind of subaltern class, unworthy of a voice in shaping the conditions of work or in governing the overall structure of the university. Even as the formative culture of a market-driven casino capitalism is denounced in the larger society because of the Katrina-like financial crisis it produced, higher education still defines itself largely as a corporation whose central mission is to reproduce the values and power relations of corporate culture. Many institutions of higher education, modeling themselves on the institutions and values at the heart of neoliberal power, have been ruthless in deeply undercutting the autonomy of faculty and graduate students while simultaneously engaging in one of the most invisible and unscrupulous examples of downsizing that has ever affected higher education. As William Pannapacker points out in The Chronicle of Higher Education, "According to the AAUP, between 1975 and 2007, the percentage of full-time tenure and tenure track faculty declined from 56.8 percent to 31.2 percent, while the number of part-time and non-tenure track faculty rose from 43.2 percent to 68.8 percent."[4] Adjunct faculty are paid poverty level wages, often have no benefits, and are viewed as merely disposable labor. And yet, while the conditions under which they work and the role of the university in promoting them has to be subject to analysis, the larger understanding of both what the university should stand for and the importance of faculty in promoting a formative culture capable of sustaining democratic values and traditions must be part of any argument to improve the status of academic labor in the university. At stake here is convincing students, administrators, the larger public, and others that the fate of higher education as well as the fate of academic labor is about not just wages, power, and rights, it is also about the importance of modes of pedagogy, learning, and possibility that are central to sustaining and engaging a formative culture that can do much more than simply create job opportunities when it provides a crucial foundation for nurturing generations of students who are capable of expanding and deepening the structures, ideologies, and practices of an aspiring democracy. One crucial place to turn in order to understand the significance of critical pedagogy is to the work of the Brazilian radical educator, Paulo Freire.

Freire is one of the most important critical educators of the twentieth century.[5] Not only is he considered one of the founders of critical pedagogy, but he also played a crucial role in developing a highly successful literacy campaign in Brazil before the onslaught of the junta in 1964. Once the military took over the government, Freire was imprisoned for a short time for his efforts. He eventually was released and went into exile, primarily in Chile and later in Geneva, Switzerland for a number of years. Once a semblance of democracy returned to Brazil, he went back to his country in 1980 and played a significant role in shaping its educational policies until his untimely death in 1997. His book Pedagogy of the Oppressed is considered one of the classic texts of critical pedagogy and has sold over a million copies, influencing generations of teachers and intellectuals both in the United States and abroad. Since the 1980s there has been no intellectual on the North American educational scene who has matched either his theoretical rigor or his moral courage. Most colleges are now dominated by conservative ideologies, hooked on methods, slavishly wedded to instrumentalized accountability measures, and run by administrators who lack either a broader vision or a critical understanding of education as a force for strengthening the imagination and expanding democratic public life. Slavishly tied to a set of market values that have been devalued because of the current financial crisis, colleges largely define themselves in instrumentalized market terms—credentials and training now replace any vestige of critical education, and increasingly those disciplines, subjects, and elements of the university that are not defined in market terms are viewed as unviable and are either downsized or eliminated.

As the market-driven logic of neoliberal capitalism continues to devalue all aspects of the public interest, one consequence is that the educational concern with excellence has been removed from matters of equity while higher education, once conceptualized as a public good, has been reduced to a private good. Universities are now largely

defined through the corporate demand that they provide the skills, knowledge, and credentials to build a workforce that will enable the United States to compete and maintain its role as the major global economic and military power. Consequently, there is little interest in understanding the pedagogical foundation of higher education as a deeply civic, political, and moral practice—that is, pedagogy as a practice for freedom. As schooling is increasingly subordinated to a corporate order, any vestige of critical education is replaced by training and the promise of economic security. Similarly, as pedagogy is now subordinated to corporate and military interests, academic labor is increasingly excluded from the process of governance, removed from tenure track lines, and treated as a disposable body of temporary workers. What this means is that academics are reduced to the status of technicians and deskilled as they are denied any control over their classrooms or power within school governance structures. Overworked and under-represented politically, an increasing number of higher education faculty are reduced to part-time positions, constituting a new subaltern class of academic labor.

But there is more at stake here than a crisis of authority, the exploitation of faculty labor, and the repression of critical thought. Too many classrooms at all levels of schooling now resemble a "dead zone" where any vestige of critical thinking, self-reflection, and imagination quickly migrate to sites outside of the school only to be corrupted by a corporate-driven media culture. Higher education furthers this logic by reducing its public vision to the interests of capital and redefining itself largely as a credentializing factory for students and a petri dish for downsizing academic labor. Under such circumstances educators rarely ask questions about how schools can prepare students to be informed citizens, nurture a civic imagination, or be self-reflective about public issues and the world in which they live. As Stanley Aronowitz puts it,

Few of even the so-called educators ask the question: What matters beyond the reading, writing, and numeracy that are presumably taught in the elementary and secondary grades? The old question of what a kid needs to become an informed 'citizen' capable of participating in making the large and small public decisions that affect the larger world as well as everyday life receives honorable mention but not serious consideration. These unasked questions are symptoms of a new regime of educational expectations that privileges job readiness above any other educational values.[6]

Unless the attack on academic labor is understood within the larger disciplinary measures at work in the university—measures that aim to eliminate any social formation that can potentially engage in critical pedagogy, challenge authority, and collectively assume power—the issue of contract labor will appear incidental to the larger transformations and politics now plaguing higher education. Put differently, higher education needs to be defended as a crucial public sphere, and faculty autonomy and student empowerment should be regarded as central and powerful components of that vision.

Against this regime of stripped down labor and "bare pedagogy" cleansed of all critical elements of teaching and learning, Paulo Freire believed that all education in the broadest sense was part of a project of freedom, and eminently political because it offered students the conditions for self-reflection, a self-managed life, and particular notions of critical agency. As Aronowitz puts it in his analysis of Freire's work on literacy and critical pedagogy:

Thus, for Freire literacy was not a means to prepare students for the world of subordinated labor or "careers," but a preparation for a self-managed life. And self-management could only occur when people have fulfilled three goals of education: self-reflection, that is, realizing the famous poetic phrase, "know thyself," which is an understanding of the world in which they live, in its economic, political and, equally important, its psychological dimensions. Specifically "critical" pedagogy helps the learner become aware of the forces that have hitherto ruled their lives and especially shaped their consciousness. The third goal is to help set the conditions for producing a new life, a new set of arrangements where power has been, at least in tendency, transferred to those who literally make the social world by transforming nature and themselves.[7]

What Paulo made clear in Pedagogy of the Oppressed, his most influential work, is that pedagogy at its best is about neither training, teaching methods, nor political indoctrination. For Freire, pedagogy is not a method or an a priori technique to be imposed on all students but a political and moral practice that provides the knowledge, skills, and social relations that enable students to explore the possibilities of what it means to be critical citizens while expanding and deepening their participation in the promise of a substantive democracy. Critical thinking for Freire was not an object lesson in test-taking, but a tool for self-determination and civic engagement. For Freire, critical thinking was not about the task of simply reproducing the past and understanding the present. To the contrary, it was about offering a way of thinking beyond the present, soaring beyond the immediate confines of one's experiences, entering into a critical dialogue with history, and imagining a future that would not merely reproduce the present. Theodor Adorno captures the spirit of Freire's notion of critical thinking by insisting that "Thinking is not the

intellectual reproduction of what already exists anyway. As long as it doesn't break off, thinking has a secure hold on possibility. Its insatiable aspect, its aversion to being quickly and easily satisfied, refuses the foolish wisdom of resignation. ...Open thinking points beyond itself."[8]

Freire rejected those regimes of educational degradation organized around the demands of the market, instrumentalized knowledge, and the priority of training over the pursuit of the imagination, critical thinking, and the teaching of freedom and social responsibility. Rather than assume the mantle of a false impartiality, Freire believed that critical pedagogy must acknowledge that human life is conditioned—not determined— and recognize the crucial necessity of not only reading the world critically but also intervening in the larger social order as part of the responsibility of an informed citizenry. According to Freire, the political and moral demands of pedagogy should amount to more than the school and classroom being mere instruments of official power or assuming the role of apologists for the existing order—and they should amount to much more than the Obama administration seems to believe, given its willingness to give Bush's reactionary educational policies a new name and a new lease on life. Freire rejected those modes of pedagogy that supported economic models and modes of agency in which freedom is reduced to consumerism and economic activity is released from any value criterion except profitability and the neglect of a rapidly expanding mass of wasted humans. Critical pedagogy attempts to understand how power works through the production, distribution, and consumption of knowledge within particular institutional contexts and seeks to constitute students as informed subjects and social agents. In this instance, the issue of how identities, values, and desires are shaped in the classroom becomes the very grounds of politics. Critical pedagogy is invested in both the practice of self-criticism about the values that inform teaching and a critical self-consciousness regarding what it means to equip students with analytical skills to be self-reflective about the knowledge and values they confront in classrooms. Moreover, such a pedagogy attempts not only to provide the conditions for students to understand texts and different modes of intelligibility, but also to open up new avenues for them to make better moral judgments that will enable them to assume some sense of responsibility toward the other in light of those judgments.

Freire was acutely aware that what makes critical pedagogy so dangerous to ideological fundamentalists, the ruling elites, religious extremists, and right-wing nationalists all over the world is that central to its very definition is the task of educating students to become critical agents who actively question and negotiate the relationships between theory and practice, critical analysis and common sense, and learning and social change. Critical pedagogy opens up a space where students should be able to come to terms with their own power as critically engaged citizens; it provides a sphere where the unconditional freedom to question and assert is made central to the purpose higher education, if not democracy itself. And as a political and moral practice, way of knowing, and literate engagement, critical pedagogy attempts to "make evident the multiplicity and complexity of history."[9] History in this sense is engaged as a narrative open to critical dialogue rather than predefined text to be memorized and accepted unquestioningly. Pedagogy in this instance provides the conditions to cultivate in students a healthy skepticism about power, a "willingness to temper any reverence for authority with a sense of critical awareness."[10] As a performative practice, pedagogy takes as one of its goals the opportunity for students to be able to reflectively frame their own relationship to the ongoing project of an unfinished democracy. It is precisely this relationship between democracy and pedagogy that is so threatening to so many of our educational leaders and spokespersons today, and it is also the reason why Freire's work on critical pedagogy and literacy is more relevant today than when it was first published. Clearly, such a pedagogy demands not just a critical understanding of the relations between knowledge and power, learning and experience, and education and social change, but also a willingness to fight for the labor conditions that both promote academic freedom and struggle against academic repression. At the heart of any vestige of critical pedagogy is both the project of relating education to the creation of informed citizens and the labor conditions that give faculty the opportunity to engage in the pedagogies that make such a project possible. This is not merely a dispute over who should control the classroom, but a struggle over how power is shared, used, and institutionalized so as to create the structural and ideological conditions for experiencing the university as a democratic public sphere.

According to Freire, all forms of pedagogy represent a particular way of understanding society and a specific commitment to the future. Critical pedagogy, unlike dominant modes of teaching, insists that one of the fundamental tasks of educators is to make sure that the future points the way to a more socially just world, a world in which the discourses of critique and possibility in conjunction with the values of reason, freedom, and equality function to alter, as part of a broader democratic project, the grounds upon which life is lived. Such a future cannot be built on the backs of a subaltern class of academics who are powerless, overworked, denied basic benefits, and removed from shaping policy. Nor is the problem solved by simply calling for a limit to the pool of potential faculty. This is

a political issue that is about power, the meaning of education, and what role faculty, students, and administrators are going to play in shaping a future much different than the present. This is hardly a prescription for political indoctrination in the classroom; rather, it is a project that gives critical education its most valued purpose and meaning, which is "to encourage human agency, not mold it in the manner of Pygmalion."[11] It is a position that also threatens right-wing private advocacy groups, neoconservative politicians, and conservative extremists. Such individuals and groups are keenly aware that critical pedagogy with its emphasis on the hard work of critical analysis, moral judgments, and social responsibility goes to the very heart of what it means to address real inequalities of power among faculty and administrators, or among others across society, and to conceive of education as a project for freedom while at the same time foregrounding a series of important and often ignored questions such as: What is the role of teachers and academics as public intellectuals? Whose interests does public and higher education serve? How might it be possible to understand and engage the diverse contexts in which education takes place? What is the role of education as a public good? How do we make knowledge meaningful in order to make it critical and transformative? How do we democratize governance? Against the right-wing view that equates any suggestion of politics with indoctrination, critical pedagogy is concerned with offering students new ways to think critically and act with authority as independent political agents in the classroom and in larger society; in other words, it is concerned with providing students with the skills and knowledge necessary for them to expand their capacities first to question the deep-seated assumptions and myths that legitimate the archaic and disempowering social practices structuring every aspect of society and then to take responsibility for intervening in the world they inhabit.

Education cannot be neutral. It is always directive in its attempt to teach students to inhabit a particular mode of agency, enable them to understand the larger world and one's role in it in a specific way, define their relationship, if not responsibility, to diverse others, and experience in the classroom some sort of understanding of a more just, imaginative, and democratic life. Pedagogy is by definition directive, but that does not mean it is merely a form of indoctrination. On the contrary, as Freire argued, education as a practice for freedom must expand the capacities necessary for human agency, and hence the possibilities for how academic labor should be configured to ensure such a project that is integral to democracy itself. Surely, this suggests that even within the privileged precincts of higher education, educators should nourish those pedagogical practices that promote "a concern with keeping the forever unexhausted and unfulfilled human potential open, fighting back all attempts to foreclose and pre-empt the further unravelling of human possibilities, prodding human society to go on questioning itself and preventing that questioning from ever stalling or being declared finished."[12] In other words, critical pedagogy forges an expanded notion of politics and agency through a language of skepticism and possibility, and a culture of openness, debate, and engagement—all those elements now at risk because of the current and most dangerous attacks on higher education. This was Paulo's legacy, one that invokes dangerous memories and is increasingly absent from any conservative discourse about current educational problems. Unfortunately, it is also absent from much of the discussion on the current status of academic labor.

For Freire, intellectuals must match their call for making the pedagogical more political with an ongoing effort to build those coalitions, affiliations, and social movements capable of mobilizing real power and promoting substantive social change both within and outside of the university. The struggle for better working conditions for faculty must be matched by the call for the university to fulfill its role as a democratic public sphere. In doing so, the call for faculty rights and power becomes connected and energized by a broader public discourse aimed at improving the unjust conditions that increasingly affect not only faculty but society in general.

Some of these demands are current being made by the Occupy Movement. Young people no longer recognize themselves in terms preferred by the market and they no longer believe in an education that ignores critical thinking, dialogue, and those values that engage matters of social responsibility and civic engagement. Nor do they believe in an education that treats them as disposable labor, a subaltern class of third rate workers. But students have more to offer than a serious critique of the university and its complicity with a number of anti-democratic forces now shaping the larger society, they are also modeling for faculty and others interested in education new modes of participatory democracy, and exhibiting forms of pedagogy and education that connect learning with social change and knowledge with more democratic modes of self-development and social empowerment--not unlike what Paulo Friere called for in his own pedagogy. Clearly, as faculty we have a lot to learn from both the ways in which students are changing the conversation about education, important social issues, democracy, and what it might mean to imagine a new understanding of politics and a different future. The questions students are raising are important for faculty to rethink those modes of professionalism, specialism, and social relations that have cut them off from addressing important social issues and the larger society. The Occupy protesters are right in arguing that higher education is a

vital public sphere that should be at the forefront in addressing these issues. Moreover, faculty and administrators need to develop new modes of governance that both include student participation and voices and do what they can to offer up a new model of pedagogy, one that combines scholarly rigor and knowledge in an effort to help young people bridge the gap between the university and everyday life. Higher education should not be used to an benefit corporate interests or the warfare state, but to nurture and inspire existing and future generations of young people to take up the challenge of determining whether education will play a pivotal in enabling a future in which the claim on democracy will be fulfilled.

## Endnotes

1. For an excellent analysis of contingent academic labor as part of the process of the subordination of higher education to the demands of capital and corporate power, see Marc Bousquet, How the University Works: Higher Education and the Low-Wage Nation (New York: New York University Press, 2008).

2. Ian Angus, "Academic Freedom in the Corporate University", ed. Mark Cote, Richard J. F. Day, and Greig de Peuter, eds. Utopian Pedagogy: Radical Experiments against Neoliberal Globalization, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), pp. 67–68.

3. These themes in Arendt's work are explored in detail in Elizabeth Young-Bruehl, Why Arendt Matters (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

4. William Pannapacker, "The MLA and Academic Labor: From Marginality to Leadership," The Chronicle of Higher Education (December 30, 2009). Online: http://chronicle.com/blogPost/The-MALAcademic-Labor-/19479.

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6. Stanley Aronowitz, Against Schooling: For an Education That Matters (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2008), p. xii.

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8. Theodor Adorno, "Education after Auschwitz," Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), pp. 291–292.

9. Edward Said, Reflections on Exile and Other Essays (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 141.

10. Said, Reflections on Exile and Other Essays, p. 501.

11. Stanley Aronowitz, "Introduction," in Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of Freedom (Boulder: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998), pp. 10–11.

12. Zygmunt Bauman and Keith Tester, Conversations with Zygmunt Bauman (Malden: Polity Press, 2001), p. 4.

# Blow Out, Blow Back, Blow Up, Blow Off: The Plutonomic Politics of Economic Crisis since 2001

## Timothy W. Luke

Two decades after the close of the Cold War, 2011 is an opportune time for reflections about the present and recent past. Twenty years ago as the Soviet Union was crumbling, Christopher Lasch asserted in The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics (1991), "it ought to be clear by now that neither fascism nor socialism represents the wave of the future. . . . None of this means that the future will be safe for democracy, only that the danger to democracy comes less from totalitarian or collectivist movements abroad than from the erosion of its psychological, cultural, and spiritual foundations from within" (Lasch, 1991: 24). At the same time, Lasch fretted about the growing "revolt of the elites" in which he saw a powerful, prestigious, and a privileged new class of wealthy professional-technical experts--emerging all across the U.S.A. and other developed Western economies--increasingly were making themselves and their embedded institutional networks at the top 5, 10 or even 20 percent of society independent of public services, decaying cities, and civic activities in their nation states.

By 1995, Lasch argued with regard to the new class that "in effect, they have removed themselves from the common life. . . Many of them have ceased to see themselves as Americans in any important sense, implicated in America's destiny for better or worse" (Lasch, 1995: 45). On the one hand, with the growth of "the borderless global economy, money has lost its links to nationality," and, on the other hand, the mobile, cosmopolitan, and self-centered new class increasingly had "little inclination to make sacrifices or to accept responsibility" as their denationalized businesses, professions, and skills followed their money into the liquid modernity of globalism in which "the cosmopolitanism of the favored few, because it is uninformed by the practice of citizenship turns out to be a higher form of parochialism" (Lasch, 1995: 46, 47). Being proponents of more material progress in 1991, the new class did not seem at all enamored with "a return to a more frugal existence: such views fell outside the progressive consensus" (Lasch, 1991: 529).

Things have changed, however, during the past two decades. The worried open acknowledgement of global climate change, excessive state borrowing, overextended public services, and rapid economic globalization have become secure articles of faith for many among this new class. Indeed, for their most successful factions among "the super-rich" (Brenner, 2002; Hacker and Pierson, 2010; and, Taibbi, 2010), there is a willing acceptance of frugality, impoverishment or dispossession, as long as these deprivations are endured by the many rather than them, while they affirm a renewed faith in the central importance of growing prosperity for the elite few (Kapur, Macleod, and Singh, 2005). These rhetorical concessions, then, are foundational principles among "the new global elite" (Freeland, 2011), which has become more evident in Lasch's "revolt" of talented and wealthy elites in richer and poor countries alike. This brief study of the U.S.A. in the twenty-first century examines aspects of the "more frugal existence" for the many, now known as "the 99 Percent" after the Occupy Wall Street occupation of Lower Manhattan's Zuccotti Park on September 17, 2011, created by continuous economic upheaval. It also probes the consolidation of greater wealth among the privileged and/or talented elites, who are now identified as "the One Percent" at the top of today's twirling economic booms and busts. From 1968 to 2009, income inequality between the richest Americans versus those at the poverty level almost doubled, this income inequality was the largest of all Western industrial economies,

and it is becoming politically explosive (Leonard, 2010).

These inequalities have been developing for decades as key civic questions have failed to be addressed. With the fragmentation and then collapse of the U.S.S.R. in 1991, which perhaps became nearly inevitable with the suspension of the Cold War's initial conflicts over intensive ideological imperatives in 1969-1971 with the superpower détente between Moscow and Washington, or its subtle strategic shifts during 1979-1981 in response to the rise of radical Islam against secular modernism, one might ask if the foundational purposes of national power changed. As that long twilight struggle between dueling militant secular ideologies was followed in the 1990s by the 24x7 trading cycles of multiple economic and cultural markets, did the central characteristics of the state change? Instead of asking what allows a nation-state to feel entitled to ask its citizens to be willing die for it (Foucault, 2007: 143), what happens when the citizenry now die to ask the nation-state to entitle them endlessly to individual prosperity, personal wealth, and safe employment? And, then, what happens as the state cannot deliver on those requests except for a favored few? It would appear that it leads to the creation, cultivation and consolidation of plutonomy.

## I.   Blow Out: A Nation of NINJAs?

There are many places to search for answers to these global questions on this terrain, but why not start at a very local level? In the wake of the Washington Mutual Bank's collapse in 2008, a class-action lawsuit against both WAMU's managers and owners turned up thousands of irregular, fraudulent, and predatory acts of commerce during the 2000s. One case can be cited as exemplary on all accounts. Soledad Aviles, a 57 year old Mexican immigrant, working as a glass cutter at $9 an hour, was sold a $615,000 house during 2006 in Orange County, CA. To meet his monthly payments, the bank's loan papers essentially required 96 percent of Aviles' net income (Fuentes, 2009: 1279-1280), and this requirement was made after his wife and three of his six daughters already had all agreed to service the mortgage with him. Moreover, this payment figure was itself incorrect, because his mortgage lender and real estate broker falsely reported the household's income at $13,000 a month (Taibbi, 2010: 83).

Not speaking or reading English, Aviles signed these loan papers, which were full of hidden charges, obligating him to pay $4,800 a month for the house instead of the $3,600 he believed he and his family could cover (Fuentes 2009: 1280). Eager to move property, realize commissions, boost transaction fees or rack up high quick returns on resold closed deals, avaricious agents in the finance and housing industries from the retail to the wholesale level in the U.S.A. and abroad successfully created an apparatus in the 1990s and 2000s for the dispossession of labor, degradation of wealth, and destruction of autonomous producerism by blowing out all rational constraints on excessive consumer debt. This apparatus and its operations also made possible the role played by Soledad Aviles as a new type of civic, economic, and legal subject--the "no income, no job, no assets" (NINJA) mortgage borrower, house owner or wannabe entrepreneur at the core of the 21st century's new "opportunity society."

"NINJA loans" became very ordinary commercial transactions between a financial lender and an alleged creditor. This creditor is "NINJA," because he or she has very little to no secure income, no certain job, no credible assets, but such commercial subjects were the most hotly pursued retail-level borrower during "liar loan" days in the U.S. housing bubble after September 11, 2001, when President Bush bid the nation to "go shopping" as a collective response to global terrorism. While many already are walling off those years as a bizarre aberrant cluster of characteristics, practices, and subjectivities that were exceptional moments in an extraordinary time of irrational exuberance and rampant fraud fostered by the lust for fast money, these maneuvers toward making such historical rationalizations are far too easy. In fact, the Aviles family is not exceptional, and the NINJA subject, in fact, may well be the new average consumer, basic individual or typical citizen of the present. Nearly a quarter of all house loans in the U.S.A. during 2011 were "underwater" with negative equity nationwide, but this figure in some areas runs as high as 65 percent in many states like Nevada, Florida, California or Arizona.

Living standards and income growth in the U.S.A. have stagnated in the four decades after 1973, following 25 years of steady spreading mass prosperity from 1948 to 1973. In the 1970s, this rising tide gradually ebbed. Today, the abject condition of NINJAhood, after a generation of electoral nostrums themed as "a Place called Hope," "Morning Again in America," or "the Opportunity Society," is where far too many people are left--totally broke, nearly insolvent, and frequently unemployed. Despite being residents of the last remaining superpower, a growing majority of people in the U.S.A. are increasingly trapped in the dead-ends of deskilling, underemployment, wagelessness, and assetlessness.

When evaluating such transactions between WAMU and the Aviles family, too many experts and lay people dismiss them either as "experiences on the edge" or "borderline experiences which put into question what is usually considerable acceptable" (Foucault, 2007: 132) within the history of rational investment, organized commerce or modern capitalism. Yet, at the same time, one cannot fail to recognize how the pervasive such dealings were, or cynical ease with which such commerce spread, in the bubble economy of the 2000s. Those realities, in turn, should highlight many lines of contradiction "that are particularly fragile or sensitive at the present time" (Foucault, 2007: 137). Peeling away the distracting analyses and mystified appraisals of this incredible moment in American life, in turn, can add to "the history of actuality in the process of taking shape" (Foucault, 2007: 137). To evaluate the NINJA loan, and ask questions about how, why, where, and when the NINJAs have actually became so legion is to address two key questions for "a history of the present: "What are we and what are we today?" (Foucault, 2007: 136-137).

In considering the NINJA borrowing classes, then, one discovers "the new normal" in the Great Recession and its aftermath. Such extreme conditions of economic stagnation lead to an economic and social dead end where many people work flat out to evade just barely total poverty. This extreme normality, however, coexists with other exceptional developments. Looking at many of them together could help assemble an account of contemporary capitalist corruption, conflict, and chaos. At the same time, such considerations must be a "critique of what we are saying, thinking, and doing" as financial fantasias have spun up vast markets around bubble behaviors and logics, which now to some considerable extent define "a historical ontology of ourselves" (Foucault 2007: 13). What we are doing, thinking, and saying is soaked in the turbid political currents of the post-Cold War era's boom and bust cycles of bubble economics. The actuality caught taking shape here as "actually existing liberal capitalist democracy." Its essence has been marked by selling shoddy housing with inflated property prices to unqualified buyers in declining markets propped up by failing banks all supported by easy credit, fast money, heavily indebted national governments, and inexpensive oil.

Indeed, the sovereign debt of the U.S. has been one of leading causes of new worries at home and abroad. From 1960 to 2007, the U.S. government debt levels were on average about 36 percent. Yet, after twenty years of real estate bubbles across the U.S., eight years of war in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as the recent Great Recession, this ratio had soared to 62 percent at the end of 2010 (Kashkari and Rodosky, 2011: A15) as it continues to rise in 2011. During the coming decade, overall U.S. government debt could equal the nation's GDP by 2020, if not sooner, and thereby begin to stifle private lending, hobble future economic growth, increase borrowing costs, and undercut the dollar. A blowout in the national treasury's debt management strategies will only compound the economic challenges of the past five years. Ironically, it has been the bailout of many failed plutonomic interests in order to stabilize and salvage the surviving successful ones that lies behind this recent tremendous expansion in public debt issued by the central financial authorities in the U.S. since 2006. Nevertheless, this public debt burden gravely undercuts economic opportunities in many other credit markets as well.

## II.  Blow Up: A Plutonomy?

Amidst the frenzied bubbles of the 2000s, market analysts at Citigroup made a bold assertion: the world was dividing in virtually every country into two very different and quite divergent blocs. One bloc is "the rich," "the winners," or "the best" individuals prospering at the pinnacle of their businesses, professions, and societies. This bloc's emergence marks the advent of "the plutonomy," which has certain specific characteristics:

> In a plutonomy there is no such animal as "the U.S. consumer" or "the U.K. consumer," or indeed the "Russian consumer." There are rich consumers, few in number, but disproportionate in the gigantic slice of income and consumption they take. There are the rest, the "non-rich," the multitudinous many, but only accounting for surprisingly small bites of the national pie (Kapur Macleod, and Singh, 2005: 2)

Most accounts of plutonomy highlight how "the Best," like Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos, or Steve Jobs, are making everyday life perhaps better for "the Rest." As the froth and foam of the stock market and real estate bubbles have burst, however, it is clear that plutonomic elites are not always rich because they are the best. Nonetheless, as they win, these elite meritocratic interests do tend to take most, if not all, that they can.

On the one hand, it is clear that today's ultra-rich are, by comparison to the Gilded Age or Edwardian Era, more

commonly "the working rich." In 2004, 60 percent of the top 1 percent of Americans' income came from paid work (Freeland, 2011: 48). Still, on the other hand, the intrinsic merits or greater benefits of such increased hard work are not always necessarily good for anyone, but the plutonomic interests per se. The (re)naming of plutocracy, plutarchy, or simply predatory oligarchical elitism as "plutonomics" in commercial sociologies, like those written by the Citigroup analysts in 2005, is an attempt to naturalize, if not ratify, the development of incredible levels in overall income inequality and wealth both inside and outside of the U.S.A. Such sociologies reach back into time (Spain in the 1500s, Holland in the 1600s, America in the Gilded Age), and out across space (wealthy enclaves growing in Brazil, Russia, India, China as well as the Gulf States, Singapore or Brunei since 1973 or 1991), in their efforts to normalize the few instances in which plutonomic power prevails in society.

This wealth often can disappear in quick speculative bubbles, or it can multiply slowly in more cautious investment ventures, but plutonomy's profits rarely seem to trickle down in sufficient volume to enhance the well-being of more households beyond the top 10 percent of society. In 1988, the average American taxpayer's income was $33,400. Adjusted for inflation in 2008, it actually dropped to $33,000. At the same time, the richest 1 percent of American households, or those making $380,000 annually in 2008, have experienced nearly a 33 percent rise in their incomes [http://money.cnn.com/2011/2/16/news/economy/middle_class/index.htm?iid=EL].

In turn, the ratio of the income gained by the top 10 percent of Americans to the bottom 15 percent from 1968 to 2010 rose from 7.69 to 1 in 1968 to 14.5 to 1 in 2010 (Lind, 2010). At the same time, the top 5 percent of U.S. earners accounted for 35 percent of consumer spending, but the bottom 80 percent were only 39.5 percent of consumer outlays (Lind, 2010). This same lower 80 percent received only 50.6 percent of all income in 2010, while the top 20 percent took in 49.4 percent (Lind, 2010). Other surveys have found the share of total income going out to the top 1 percent of earners in 2007 was 23.5 percent; yet, the top 1 percent in 1976 took in only 8.9 percent of all income (Frank, 2010: B17). As income inequality has mushroomed since the 1960s, a generation-long trend in most countries that experienced relatively strong year-by-year increases for mass incomes after World War II stopped or slipped into reverse. Across the U.S.A. from 1945 to 1975, incomes rose about 3 percent a year; but, as they slowed, stagnated, and stopped rising, mass anxiety and individual distress about income inequality has grown apace (Frank, 2010: B17).

Plutonomy today, therefore, has also coincided with industrial and infrastructural disaccumulation. Whereas the Gilded Age of the 1800s in America rested upon new rapid and elaborate modes of industrialization, the rate of investment in new industrial technology, research, and plant has declined across the U.S.A. since the late 1970s. Of course, American firms still make these major investments, but they deploy them abroad with foreign partners at many other sites around the world. So the fastest growing sectors of the American economy since the Reagan era have been in finance, insurance, and real estate (FIRE) concerns, coordinating such economic globalization schemes. Disinvestment at home coupled with investment abroad have fed the growth of FIRE businesses along with the rising incomes of the skilled service sector workers from the new class global elites employed in advancing these pursuits. Without the Aviles family, and millions of others like them in the U.S.A., however, plutonomy for the new class elites would not have become so vibrant. Hence, the fine line between a plutonomy and a plutarchy or plutocracy is a fuzzy one, but the kinship between plutonomy and a kleptonomy is more evident as the proliferation of so many NINJAs show. Whether the robbed were the mortgagee or mortgagor, the specific retail borrower or vague wholesale flows of lendable monies, the local municipality coping with explosive land development or transnational funds of mobile capital in search of profit, plutonomy also has fostered both kleptocratic protectionism and kleptonomic triumphalism. Those who posed as "the best" did everything in their power to take advantage of "the rest" as well as not join their immiserated ranks. Hence, plutonomy thrives upon the NINJA subject, and NINJA subjects multiply because of plutonomics.

A plutonomy, then, is not necessarily rational or astute. During the 2007-2009 financial crisis, "by one measure, for about every $40 in assets, the nation's five largest banks had only $1 in capital to cover losses, meaning that a 3 percent drop in asset values could have wiped them out. The banks had their excessive leverage using derivatives, off-balance-sheet entities and other devices," according to the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission (Chan, 2011: A1). "Best practices" were thrown out the window over the past generation as plutonomic interests worked every angle to serve their gains. As Lehman Brothers, Bear Sterns, and AIG discovered, such paths to plutonomic power proved disastrous for the new class experts managing these firms, the NINJAs they preyed upon, and the rest of the American economy.

## III. Blow Back: This is the Best for the Rest?

Remarkably, the financial fuel of most of the growth seen in most of the G-20 economies for nearly two generations was the flow of funds coming from larger public deficits and accessible private borrowing. While the threat of liquidity traps always loom out amidst such tactics, a number of troubling financial trends has fueled the creative destruction of global capitalism since the oil shocks and geopolitical impasses of the Nixon era. While many point to rapid globalization or technological innovation, the urge to splurge on borrowed money has remained the world's key economic resource. As Brenner observes,

> It was only the turn to large-scale Keynesian federal deficits, accommodated by easy credit, which made possible the subsidies to demand that enabled the advanced capitalist economies to transcend the oil crisis recession of 1974-75 and to continue to expand during the remainder of the decade. As it would for the next two decades, the massive growth of debt--especially public debt, which enabled parallel increases in private borrowing--constituted the indispensable key to international economic stability and expansion. Since only the US government was able, and willing to sustain the ever larger budget deficits that turned out to be necessary--and the increased current account deficits that accompanied them--it was only US government borrowing that kept the world economy afloat during the following extended period of reduced private profitability and capital accumulation (Brenner, 2002: 33).

Here the conditions in the 1970s and 1980s were being created, and then sustained, to foster multitudes of NINJA subjects as well as deepen pockets of plutonomy. Who borrows from whom, how, when, and where fuels the wild growth of FIRE-based prosperity as well as the underemployment, joblessness, and asset stripping endured by NINJA subjects in an economy on FIRE.

During this same time frame, income disparities in the U.S.A. have grown far more pronounced as plutonomy grew. In 1970, the poor in the U.S.A. earned more than 10 percent of all income, and the "super rich" only earned 1 percent of all income. Actually, the poorest third of all Americans still received 10 times as much income as the richest .01 of 1 percent in the U.S.A. (Johnston, 2005: E1). During the next three decades, however, this balance shifted as the world witnessed a remarkable increase in plutonomic inequality.

By 2000, the 96 million wage earners at the bottom of America's class structure earned as much as only the top 28,000 super-rich individuals at the top of society. The poor's share of all income fell to 5 percent of all wage earnings, which was a 50 percent decrease, but the rich saw their share quintuple to more than 5 percent of all income. Adjusted for inflation between 1970 and 2001, the average 25 year old male wage earner--or a key household-forming economic agent in those days--in 1970 made the equivalent of $2.00 more an hour than his counterpart in 2001 (Johnston, 2005: E1). The bottom 99 percent of all Americans from the very poor to the middle class saw an average increase in total income of only $2,710--less than $100 a year for all workers (or about 5 cents an hour raise per year for 30 years). Under these conditions, it is no surprise to see the NINJA subject becoming more multitudinous. The top 1 percent of the plutonomy at the same time, did much better. Their average annual household incomes rose from $20.3 million to $24 million from 1970 to 2001 (Johnston, 2005: E1).

By 2004, the average American CEO was taking home 300 times the average pay of ordinary workers, but in 1970 that spread had only been 30 times greater (The Economist, June 17, 2006: 30). These trends toward greater income and wealth inequalities were changing slowly in the 1970s, but they rapidly accelerated after 1980. The share of aggregate income going to highest-earning 1 percent of Americans was 8 percent in 1980, but it had doubled to over 16 percent by 2004. In 1980, the top one-tenth of 1 percent of Americans took home 2 percent of all income in 1980, but the same fraction garnered 7 percent in 2004 (The Economist, June 17, 2006: 30). Even after the economic turmoil of 2007-2009, this figure rose further by 2010. The best, the super-rich, or the plutonomic interests, it would appear, have not been doing well by the rest, the non-rich, the NINJA multitudes--either in the U.S.A. or abroad. During 2009, even in the depths of the Great Recession, as the average income of most people slipped, the average income of the top five percent of earners still rose (Lieberman, 2011: 154). During 2009, the top ten percent of American households controlled nearly half of the nation's wealth, while the top 0.1 percent controlled about 10 percent of the country's wealth. Half a century before, the bottom 90 percent controlled 68 percent of the economy [http://money.cnn.com/2011/2/22/news/economy/income_inequality/index.htm?iid=EL].

In 2010, some in the U.S.A. look back at 1990 with satisfaction, because they witnessed then the demise of the U.S.S.R. and its state socialist alternatives to contemporary plutonomic American capitalism. Of course, as the Russian economy shrank to the size of the Netherlands with the Soviet Union's territorial fragmentation, industrial collapse, and economic stagnation, a few Russians have profited immensely through privatizing former

state enterprises, acquiring control over natural resource markets or specializing in new forms of corruption in their own extraordinary "actually existing post-socialist plutonomy." Less often celebrated is the nearly coincidental implosion of "Japan, Inc.," which had threatened during the 1970s and 1980s to eclipse the U.S.A. as the world's largest economy by 2010. Instead Japan's economy in 2010 is about the same size as it was in 1991--$5.7 trillion of GDP--and China has overtaken Japan as the second largest economy in the world (Fackler, 2010: W17). Meanwhile, the American economy has more than doubled in size from 1990-91 to 2010 with a $14.7 trillion GDP. The past two decades have been tumultuous in the U.S.A. with many booms and busts; but, at the same time, plutonomic America has avoided the worst effects of economic stagnation or monetary deflation that have deformed the former Soviet Union and Japan.

Capitalism, then, can work well enough to not stop entirely as well as poorly enough to not grow effectively. As many marketplaces all around the world have seen for years, decades or generations, a truly efficient way forward to attain more gainful lives, fuller employment or quicker growth often proves evasive. Instead, the structural conditions of excess capacity, plentiful liquidity, high unemployment, rife underemployment, or slow to no organized growth characterizes many markets' exchange of goods and services. Capitalism does not actually end, but its manifest ends can become more elusive, empty, and then evil for many in the marketplace. That the last generation has ineptly misspent many years "sustaining" what has been taken as economic "development" in Russia and Japan only reinforces this point.

Markets are established to promote capital formation, wealth accumulation, long-term investment, and organized competition through mechanisms for the rational sale and purchase of commodities. With the automation of many exchanges, however, the behaviors of sellers and purchasers, minute pricing variations in stocks, bonds, commodities, FOREX, or derivatives, and the relative speed of transactional executions are creating moments of manipulation where and when electronic strategies tied to high-frequency algorithmic traders are making money only out of other money makers' real time behavioral performance patterns. Scanning price variations, measuring price differences between exchanges, and predicting future patterns in millisecond to minute measures begins to overshadow older modes of profit-seeking pegged to the standard market trading times of days, weeks, months, quarters, and years.

While such trading innovations have been justified in terms of increased profitability, efficiency, and service, they also are putting at risk most fungible assets and their markets. The average NASDAQ trade completes its roundtrip of order execution in 98 millionths of a second, but automated trading hubs are now under construction to attain transcontinental order execution speeds of 60 milliseconds (Bowley, 2011: BU1). Such accelerated liquidities provide new flows upon which plutonomy can more openly sail as well as more deeply dig the already ragged erosions in which the growing NINJA, and soon-to-be NINJA, classes must live.

## IV.   Blow Off: Predatory Professionalism?

The plutonomic analysts' story line about the frightening collapse of America's once high-wage labor market tends to naturalize its inevitability and irreversibility by tying it to the allegedly relentless advance of technology (Luke, 1999). Consequently, a January 2010 Time magazine, for example, claims "the truth is that the decline in jobs is the result of megatrends including the growth of technology and the rise of globalization" (Karabell, 2010: 32). At the same turn, Time celebrates how "North Dakota's unemployment rate is 3.8%, the lowest in the nation" (Saporito, 2010: 32) thanks to its technologically sophisticated mining, oil, gas, and energy industries and the ready buyers for those goods in India or China. Education and high-tech skills allegedly are the ticket to income, jobs, and assets. Yet, during 2010, December's 9.4 percent--down from 9.8 percent in November--official unemployment rate, those with some college training have an 8.7 percent rate of joblessness and those with a bachelor's degree or higher was 5.1 percent jobless. Taken together, these workers are experiencing an abnormally high level of unemployment (when 5 or 6 percent was once regarded as "normal") in the 1970s or 1990s (Saporito, 2010: 28-29).

What has been nearly forgotten in the bubble economy of the 2000s is the complex and protracted "long downturn" in the major Western economies from 1973 to 1995, coming on the heels of the "long boom" of 1947 to 1973. Moreover, the past two decades also has seen the middle class being closed out of access to higher education as tuition increases, particularly at public universities has risen much faster than inflation. From 1988 to 2008, tuition and fees increased 130 percent, while middle class incomes stagnated. To have kept this inflationary pace, family incomes in 2008 would have needed to be $77,000 rather than $33,000 annually. Student loans can, and have made

up, this difference, but now many students graduate with up to 20 years of serious indebtedness to obtain degrees that once were far more accessible due to public support [http://money.cnn.com/2011/06/13/news/economy/college_tuition_middle_class/index.htm?iid=Popular]. Indeed, "a long, debilitating stagnation held the US and the world economy firmly in its grip from the early 1970s right up to the middle 1990s, making for the snail-like growth of productiveness and declining living standards for more than a generation" (Brenner, 2002: 4). Floods of liquidity pumped into the market to mitigate the downside of the Asian currency crises, the big "dot.com" bust of 2000 as well as the mass panic triggered by the 9/11 attacks in the U.S.A. are what restarted many businesses in the 2000s.

A great deal of cheap money flooded into the market after the evisceration of the Glass-Steagall Act during the waning days of the Clinton administration. Alan Greenspan, Robert Rubin and Larry Summers, who were a Time magazine's 1999 cover trio tagged as "the Committee to Save the World," insured that high levels of liquidity poured into the economy to cope with the Long-Term Capital Management crisis, the Russian and Southeast Asian currency crises, various emerging country stock market and bank crashes, and, of course, the alleged Y2K computer system meltdown. For the feared Y2K crisis alone, the Fed dumped an extra $147 billion into the American economy just in case ATMs or debit card machines did not work (Taibbi, 2010: G2). Of course, the Y2K collapse never happened, but the cash stayed in circulation.

By the turn of the century, Washington had put $1.7 trillion additional dollars into the market that were not there five years before. From 2000 to 2004, Greenspan, in turn, encouraged consumers to get new home loans, tap into home equity, and step-up household consumption. After all, President Bush's clarion call to America after 9/11 boiled down to one goal--"go shopping" to support the "coalition of the willing" fighting to defeat "the Axis of Evil."

From the year Bush invaded Iraq in 2003 until the year after his election in 2004, the level of outstanding mortgage debt in the U.S.A. grew $3.7 trillion. This level of added borrowing in 2003, 2004, and 2005 nearly equaled the market value of all American real estate at the end of the Cold War (or $3.8 trillion) in 1990. At this key conjuncture, then, American consumers borrowed in nominal terms a sum that was nearly 200 years of accumulated savings, but much of it was done simply by riding on flows of newly printed dollars, repatriated fast money coming as dollar deposits from foreign lenders, or personal savings drawn-down from personal credit lines on existing home equity.

The Federal Reserve Bank had held interest rates flat or cut them from 2000 to 2004, and Alan Greenspan at the same time called upon the citizens of George W. Bush's "Opportunity Society" to use their home equity and/or get adjustable mortgages in order to leverage this historic opportunity to "enrich themselves" (Taibbi, 2010: 71-72). Then the Fed commenced a rate increase drive in June 2004 that steadily moved rates up from 1 to 4.5 percent through 2006. Millions of borrowers had been lured into mortgages contracts with cheap money, easy home equity loans, and a vast supply of new housing stock rising across the Sunbelt states where everyone has been moving since 1945, but this rate tightening created a tremendous trap.

In their efforts to save the world, then, the eventualization of the recent American and world financial crisis was set. These conditions are not unlike how Foucault describes them, namely, "groups of elements where, in a totally empirical and temporary way, connections between mechanisms of coercion, maybe also legislative elements, rules, material set-ups, authoritative phenomena, etc." that acquires both "empirical observability" and "historical acceptability" as an ensemble of political economic, and legal choices (Foucault, 2007: 59, 61). The potential mechanisms for a severe crisis, therefore, eventualized themselves in years of ill-considered actual market decisions by both hapless NINJAs and predatory professionals both moving in search of profitable shelter and sheltered profit. The Federal Reserve's "frantic deregulation of the financial markets in the late nineties led directly to the housing bubble; in particular, the deregulation of the derivatives market had allowed Wall Street to create a vast infrastructure for chopping mortgage debt, disguising bad loans as AAA-rated investments, and selling the whole mess off on a secondary market as securities" (Taibbi, 2010: 73). As the January 2011 Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission report notes "'The crisis was the result of human action and inaction, not of Mother Nature or computer models gone haywire'. . .'The captains of industry and public stewards of our financial system ignored warnings and failed to question, understand and manage evolving risks within a system essential to the well-being of the American public'" (Chan, 2011: A1).

From this vantage, the economic crisis of 2007-2009 is an excellent window for looking out on to "how actual relations of subjugation manufacture subjects" (Foucault, 1997: 45). For Alan Greenspan, advances in new computer technologies, better network connectivities, and more financial services created fabulous new opportunities:

Technological advances have resulted in increased efficiency and scale within the financial services industry. . . With these advances in technology, lenders have taken advantage of credit-scoring models and other techniques for efficiently extending credit to a broader spectrum of consumers (Greenspan cited in Taibbi, 2010: 73.

Such obviously bland declarations are important, because they indicate how relations of domination "assert themselves in their multiplicity, their differences, their specificity, or their reversibility," allowing one to observe "how the various operators of domination support one another, relate to one another, at how they converge and reinforce one another in some cases, and negate or strive to annul one another in other cases" (Foucault, 1997: 45).

In fact, the relations of juridico-legal subjugation via real estate ownership coupled with the technologies of fast financial intervention reinforced the social formations of plutonomics by creating new abject subjectivities, like the NINJA home occupant. These conditions created the actual relations of subjugation that remade subjects to the degree that real estate agents, builders, major consumer banks, and regulators could make "a jobless immigrant with no documentation and no savings into an AAA-rated mortgage risk" (Taibbi, 2010: 73). Before 2002, subprime loans (those borrowers with a credit score below 660) were less than $100 billion of mortgages a year. Yet, in 2005, the new "technological innovations" celebrated by Alan Greenspan made it possible to lend out $600 billion of subprime loans a year (Taibbi, 2010: 83). With opportunities like this, it is not surprising that such major sea changes in the economy allowed 65 percent of all income in the U.S.A. from 2002 to 2007 to flow increasingly to the top 1 percent of the population (Freeland, 2011: 48).

Furthermore, the crisis even now is not abating. Instead the NINJA subjects, as well as their barely solvent neighbors, are mired in mortgages greater than their home's worth, and stuck with houses in markets with falling values or neighborhoods with many vacant, unfinished or derelict homes. Many citizens and consumers typically are shackled by these arrangements of indebted servitude to just stay in place. About one-in-four homes with mortgages were "underwater" in July to September 2010 (18 of every 100 owe more than 110 percent of the home's presumed value) with about 30 percent in debt for 75 to 100 percent of their homes estimated value (Bialik, 2010: A4A).

During the two years running from September 2008 to September 2010, American households, or those, which had them, withdrew $311 billion from their savings and investment accounts. This sum equals 1.4 percent of all disposable income, and it stands in marked contrast to trends during the prior six decades going back to the Truman administration. Until 2008, American households tended to add on average 12 percent of their disposable income every year to savings (Whitehouse, 2011). On one level, this drawdown represents those with some assets paying down expensive debt in lieu of receiving an essentially flat or negative rate of return on their money. Yet, on another level, this historic break also represents the American consumer using his or her own assets to cope with sudden unemployment, underemployment, and fringe benefit reductions/eliminations as the state and business sector have failed to create new jobs and eliminated collective benefits. At no other points in post-war U.S. history has this development occurred--the recessions of the late 1950s, early 1970s, the oil shocks of 1973 and 1979, the recessions after Reagan's George H. W. Bush or George W. Bush's elections in 1980, 1988 or 2000 all still saw aggregate household savings rise. By 2011, however, household wealth in the U.S.A. was still nearly $8 trillion less than in 2006 despite the slight rebound in the stock market. The larger agendas of the plutonomic elites, then, are again being served as their directives dictate that one care for oneself only with one's own means and never count upon much decisive social assistance.

Undoubtedly, housing market trends and unemployment drove many to make these expenditures as millions struggle to prevent foreclosure on their homes. 2010 saw 1 million homes receiving actual foreclosures, and 2011 will probably see 1.2 million houses being repossessed nationwide (Roanoke Times, January 14, 2011: A8). States where the home-building craze was most extreme, like Nevada, California, Arizona, and Florida, and those where the industrial collapse was most pronounced, like Illinois or Michigan, have had double-digit rates of foreclosure as well as the greatest average housing price declines. Across the nation, 1 out of every 45 homes received a foreclosure notice, or 2.9 million overall (Roanoke Times, January 14, 2011: A8). Even though only one-third of those properties were repossessed in 2010, many more will undoubtedly be lost in 2011 as consumers exhaust their available savings and further housing price declines make refinancing difficult or impossible. While some banks appear willing to work out refinancing arrangements, or even let existing owners squat in the properties instead of abandoning them, many millions of homes are verging on foreclosure in 2011. Thus, the family home, which is the largest single asset most individuals have depended upon since the 1970s, as traditional defined benefit pension arrangements were trimmed back for nearly 80 percent of the work force, is being degraded and then destroyed for millions of households amidst the lingering gains for the nation's plutonomic elites.

Greenspan's reifying thesis about technological innovations actually occludes more troubling realities in the U.S.A. Plutonomy in America does not track the outlines of a stable economy and society. Instead,

> Such a level of economic inequality, not seen in the United States since the eve of the Great Depression, bespeaks a political economy in which the financial rewards are increasingly concentrated among a tiny elite and whose risks are borne by an increasingly exposed and unprotected middle class. Income inequality in the United States is higher than in any other advanced industrial democracy and by conventional measures comparable to that in countries such as Ghana, Nicaragua, and Turkmenistan (Lieberman, 2011: 154-155).

The growth of plutonomy as well as its attendant inequality is not a normal product of the market. It is, to the contrary, a complex artificial construct that has been pieced together from the Nixon era to the Obama administration through a series of calculated policy decisions (Hacker and Pierson, 2010).

Eager to preserve their material embeddedness in these elaborate systems of positionally entrenched rent-seeking, plutonomic experts appear to have developed at least three hedges against these technological innovations misfiring for them by leveraging the same speed, complexity, and volume of money flows that got so many new borrowers into the property markets. Thus, "the operators of domination" did indeed "support one another, relate to one another" with "these apparatuses of domination" rooted in fast money, excessive debt, and bad information. First, mortgage-issuing banks accelerated the securitization of these loans by pooling them in marketable multiples of promised steady, long-term steady return debt instruments, and then selling them for short-term profit to realize a faster time-value on their money. Mortgages pools with a potential fully amortized worth of $5 million dollars would be sold off at a quick $3 million, leaving others to collect the slow long term profits or suffer the medium-term defaults. Second, as the pools of good paper shrank, derivative instruments, like collateralized mortgage (or other debt) obligations, were devised to tier different grades of rated debt from AAA to junk with varying levels of higher return matched to lower quality rated debt. These two innovations could have worked well, but the lust for profits led many plutonomic interests to fudge factors with technology. Third, bundles of mortgages (or other debts) with high loan to value ratios, including some up with 99 percent loan to 1 percent equity, no borrower equity or collateral stake in the contracts, and no/low documentation of employment, credit, assets or residency were mixed into with good paper to provide just enough promise of profit to motivate many to make bad calls.

Truly effective risk analysis models, real credit histories or rational expectation transactions coupled with effective regulation would have long ago moved responsible experts to pull the plug on these financing packages, but most rating agencies in the U.S.A. did not. Instead they assigned many of these packaged CDO/CMO offers with a high percentage of AAA ratings. With interest rates on other credible investments so low, many desperate investors around the world jumped at such opportunities to profit from this blown off commercial churning. Thus, a full circuit of multiple, specific, and varied relations of domination in the U.S.A. activated both the NINJA nation and expansion of plutonomy through the degradation and/or destruction of savings at home and abroad.

Other devices for distorting markets, like "dark pool" trading, are supplementing these relatively more open financial strategies. Such transactions allow the traders to make exchanges without displaying the quotes for trades publicly within proprietary platforms and/or informal agreements that allow a few big operations to identity, count, price, and settle trades with front-run information. In effect, the participants in such pools are the owners, traders, and beneficiaries of the trading involved by simply managing all segments of the exchange electronically (Gorham and Singh, 2009). During the bubble economy of the 2000s, "the number of active dark pools dealing in stocks on major U.S. stock markets trebled to 29 in 2009 from about 10 in 2002" (Shunmugam, 2010). Such commerce is entirely a preserve of the new global elites who have the technological hardware, mathematical formulae, and entrenched market share to command such privileged powers over the market by making open free trade much more closed and constrained.

Indeed, society must be defended (Foucault, 1997). Yet, when the nation's economy rest upon plutonomics, then does it have to be developed by means, which essentially ensure that society must be defrauded? If so, there is much to learn from those who are the defrauded as well as those who are the defrauders. Exploring the social origins of professional-technical elite experts' near dictatorship over commerce or the foreclosed/bankrupted/dispossessed masses' frustrating experience with plutonomic democracy are important tasks. They should return us to foundational questions for the new class global elites in control of contemporary life, namely, "How does knowledge articulate power? What kind of power can be mediated through knowledge? Whose knowledge dominates whom. . . How do class divisions and conflicts develop from unequal power and knowledge?" (Luke, 1999: ix). New class knowledges articulate powers for the new global elites, while today's class divisions and conflicts are developing from radically

uneven distributions of unequal power and knowledge. In this case, the NINJA would-be home owner, the almost illiquid occupant of an underemployed job tied to sub-par rated companies, and the plutonomic global trader in liquid capital would appear to coinstantiate themselves as subjects of uncommon wealth and insolvent commonwealths in the apparatuses of domination channeling together so much of today's illiquid modernity as "economic growth."

During 1980, the average American C.E.O. earned 42 times as much as the average worker; but, by 2001, that figure had risen to 531 times as much. Not surprisingly, from 1980 to 2005, more than 80 percent of the total increase in Americans' overall incomes was gained by the wealthiest 1 percent of society (Kristof, 2010). In 2002, Kevin Phillips closed his Wealth and Democracy with a grim insight. The effects of great wealth on the shape and substance of American democracy since 1980 were becoming uncomfortably like the Gilded Age of the 1880s and 1890s. After two decades of Reaganism, he concluded:

> As the twenty-first century gets underway, the imbalance of wealth and democracy in the United States is unsustainable, at least by traditional yardsticks. Market theology and unelected leadership have been displacing politics and elections. Either democracy must be renewed, with politics brought back to life, or wealth is likely to cement a new and less democratic regime--plutocracy by some other name (Phillips, 2002: 422).

Nearly ten years later, the continuing crisis of economic excess, fiscal irresponsibility, and governmental restructuring has created a "lost decade" for all but a tiny minority of the wealthiest Americans. And, as economic dispossession, democratic degradation, and cultural corrosion spread across more and more communities in the U.S., Phillips appears to be proving correct. A new far less democratic regime is consolidating its plutocratic powers and privileges under the name of "plutonomics" in the U.S.A. as well as much of the more globalized world system organized around the greater production, prestige, and protection of monetary power for few at the expense of the many.

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# "No, they're not digital natives and they're not addicted": An Essay Critiquing Contestable Labels

Nicola F. Johnson

## Introduction

Reducing complexity is often our focus when we explain new phenomena. However when we label things in simplistic ways, we may be in fact causing harm, in fact performing symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1998) by using and promoting essences of the phenomena in question. This essay gives examples of these simplistic, inappropriate categories that essentialize people into inflexible boxes, and argues that labeling is a simplistic practice, which gives us (mis)certainty. To me, there is a need for nuanced understandings of phenomena versus reductionist suppositions. We need insight rather than generalizations and essentializations. Many (mis)assumptions are based on a lack of evidence. This short essay argues against the constant complexity reduction apparent in popular (and to a certain extent academic) discourse. It highlights the 'good' of a society shaped by and shaping the Internet. It draws together the two labels of digital natives and Internet addiction to provide examples of how symbolic violence is being inflicted.

## Two Problematic Labels

Currently I have two major problems with accepted popular (and supposedly academic) discourse. It seems that the rise and frequent use of these two contestable labels are increasing and are being reinforced in a variety of forms and through a variety of media. First, take the popular categories of digital natives and digital immigrants as introduced by John Perry Barlow in 1996, and made famous by Marc Prensky (2001). Prensky claims that digital natives 'think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors' (Prensky 2001:1, emphasis in the original), due in part to how they have grown up and always been exposed to computers. He argues that digital immigrants are those who have been introduced to technologies (which tends to include Generation X, murkily classified as those born between c. 1961 - 1981, and the baby boomers, Gen X's parents, those born post World War II, as well as older people), and that they are in some way not as readily able to take up use of or learning from these technologies as well as digital natives. These simplistic categorizations are readily taken up as truths. A critical perspective of digital natives and digital immigrants would find these categories to be inaccurate and unfortunate, as they encourage acceptance of binaries, which promulgate essentialism and simplicity. Categories are often harmful and unhelpful, and these ones do not allow for movement in and between them.

Secondly, as the author of The Multiplicities of Internet Addiction: The Misrecognition of Leisure and Learning (Johnson 2009), I argued that frequent, high usage has often been framed negatively, that is, as Internet addiction because it is 'not what we used to do in the good old days'. Digital immigrants are encompassed by a moral panic (Bennett, Maton and Kervin 2008) and assume dysfunction, unhealthy practices and morbid communication will

occur, that is, they believe heavy users will become addicted.

Many researchers seek to understand and classify things and practices through testing models, cycles, frameworks and processes in a bid to impose order on the world. They hope to reduce complexity and simplify the 'difficult'. This is fraught as our simplifications are not always accurate. While they may at times be helpful to frame our thinking, they can in fact harm what is and exists in its richness. Models, cycles and processes do not apply to everyone. Descriptions of categories only have limited usefulness. Not everyone is the same.

At an international conference I attended in 2009, a keynote speaker claimed that Generation Y were unhappy, rebellious and discontent. This appeared to be neither accurate nor based on research, but also seemed to box hundreds of thousands of young people negatively. It is incredible that such a simplistic understanding and categorization of a colorful, complex, interesting and diverse international group could be positioned in this way by an academic, supposedly one that is educated. To make supposedly factual statements about a generation of people other than the years when they were born is to make sweeping remarks indicative of thought preceding the enlightenment (for a critique of the literature surrounding the 'digital natives', see Bennett et al 2008).

Labeling is a simplistic practice. Labeling gives us (mis)certainty. The tendency or compulsion to categorize and box people is a basic part of stereotyping. Gen Y, digital natives and being addicted to the Internet are taken to be truths but each of these notions is harmful, misused and inaccurate. These derogatory terms are crude, yet many research findings are claiming that we should respond to these phenomena. We may be in fact missing out on fascinating, insightful knowledges if we endeavor to use labels, classifications and categories that presuppose or assume the continued existence of presumed essentializations. We are doing ourselves a disservice by using generational categories and claims that limit groups of people. Digital natives are a poor construct to describe a vibrant, complex and diverse group of individuals.

## You're an Internet addict

Another example of the 'simplistic categorization of a complex phenomena' is the inappropriate usage of the phrase or phenomena Internet addiction. Internet addiction disorder (IAD) has multiple names including Pathological Internet use, Problematic Internet use (PIU), Excessive Internet use, and Compulsive Internet use. There is a move towards accepting PIU as an impulse control disorder within the forthcoming American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistic Manual 5 (due May 2013).

I consider that Internet addiction is an ambiguous term based on a false (or questionable) premise. Understandings of the phrase are multiple. Performances of detrimental Internet use are also multiple. 'Addiction' is thrown around and used meaninglessly in everyday conversation so the word's importance and ramifications are limited. Medical doctors (O'Brien, Volkow and Li 2006) and drug addiction researchers (Keane, Moore and Fraser, 2011) continue to debate the politics and ethics surrounding the terms 'addiction' and 'dependence'. Internet addiction was coined as a spoof in the 1990s by Ivan Goldman and was popular in the early 2000s, but it has now been superseded by 'problematic internet use' or 'pathological internet use', which are far more accurate and represent medical implications for their existence. 'Addiction' is reserved for excessive patterns of drug use by clinicians and researchers (Liu and Potenza 2010). It should not be used in relation to technology. Previous work has explored discourses of addiction (Johnson 2009; Heyman 2009; Keane 2002) and neuroscientific (disease) and behavioral models of addiction (e.g. Keane and Hamill 2010; Seear and Fraser 2010). These scholars have highlighted that there is an inappropriateness in applying medical models of addiction of drug use to sex and the Internet, etc. Regarding the world wide web, it seems to be more helpful to explore notions of 'habit' and 'obsession' and how they are constituted, rather than seeking to apply ethics from healthy living discourses to compensate for a moral panic, especially a disorder of choice (Heyman 2009). The use of the word 'addiction' is inaccurate and shouldn't be aligned with those that suffer terribly from gambling addiction, alcoholism and drug addiction. Flyaway glib comments about addiction are not appropriate when describing everyday ways of operating, and should be demarcated from describing detrimental behaviors. As I have argued before, in many cases, Internet 'over-use' is a misrecognition of leisure and/or learning (Johnson 2009).

Internet addiction is based on presumptions, namely, that changing our leisure interests and learning pursuits from what we used to do before the Internet to the many electronic and virtual forms currently available is bad. While there are people who have unhealthy obsessions with Internet pornography and online gambling for instance, for many people they are able to create and maintain huge amounts of social, cultural and economic capital (Bourdieu 1986) on the Internet, which are not available to them in their everyday biological lives. Their virtual lives become

more important and to a certain degree, this is a human right to choose how they want to live their life (whether real or virtual). The Columbia Pictures film The Net (1995) positioned Sandra Bullock as an Internet user helplessly and hopelessly addicted to (or dependent on) her modem. Texts like these do not allow for the notion that these users are exercising choice and agency in how they utilize these technologies. Positioning heavy Internet users as 'addicted' or presuming their eventual addiction also demonstrates foolish interpretations of something that is predominantly used positively for leisure and learning (Johnson 2009). While problematic Internet use produces detriment, it seems that further qualitative research into the area is required so that we can determine if problematic Internet use can really be attributed to the Internet or if those with predisposed tendencies for obsession are enabled to take up their unhealthy interests via the environment of the Internet. Obsession can be detrimental, but this does not just pertain to Internet and technology. We each have practices that we prefer and choose to do. These online connections can be significant personally, work wise, and for our leisure (be it an interest, or as part of an online community). In my book I argued that while our natural reaction is to disparage so-called 'overuse' of the Internet, many 'over-users' are in fact gaining exceptional skills and knowledge in various areas. Therefore, their usage is a very powerful source of social and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986). Their 'obsession' can have very positive spin-offs.

It seems that values about health and behavior need to and should be challenged as the Internet is continually shaped by societal needs and wants. The labeling of heavy Internet use as negative is a response of moral panic because it does not constitute what some people understand to be a positive and healthy lifestyle. The fall back position or knee jerk reaction is that high Internet usage will lead to addiction, therefore children and people of all ages will be unhealthy and this will miss out on 'normal' existence. Those who argue for treatment of Internet addiction claim that high usage of the Internet is bad, and will lead to damaging engagement with cybersex, pornography, gambling, dependence on those who are not real, and that online relationships are not as worthwhile as face-to-face ones. This suggests that values about what constitutes 'health', 'well-being' and 'culture' are being imposed on society. An example of this was when I watched the Australian television breakfast show 'Today' (February 5, 2009) when the 'Technology Editor' came on. What was the topic? Of course, Internet safety. The top tips for children's use of the Internet were, 1) avoid social networking sites, 2) always supervise children's Internet use, and something about privacy filters not actually working. There are so many good things that the Internet offers that the mindset of looking for the bad, and making blanket statements about every child's usage, invokes a sense of frustration in me. Yes, we need to educate our children about online predators, and teach them what are appropriate sites and what the dangers are. This is paramount, but never letting your child go on the Internet unsupervised seems to be a simplistic (and for many parents) an unmanageable solution. Banning social networking sites would probably make some children want to use them more and hence look for ways to disobey parents' instructions, especially if 'all' their friends use them. What wasn't mentioned was the increasingly sophisticated privacy filters that one can choose for one's profile (available both on Facebook and MySpace). My stepdaughter – previously a frequent user of both sites – has never had any problems because she has these private settings. Despite recent international controversy about Facebook's blanket privacy settings, more education about the helpful and various filters available needs to be provided rather than stating that the solution is to ban sites and disallow unsupervised usage. Essentialist notions of 'normality' include that children should 'get outside and play', talk face to face with their peers, and be 'typical' and 'natural'. If children are on the Internet and not doing what their parents used to do for leisure, then it has been questioned and positioned as undesirable.

The Internet Addiction Test (IAT) devised by Young (1998) seems not to take into account our dependence on email and the Internet for communication and daily existence.

> Questions on the IAT include: 'How often do you check your email before something else that you need to do?' (1998:31) or 'How often do you find yourself anticipating when you will go on-line again?' (1998:32), or 'How often do you lose sleep due to late-night log-ins?' (1998:32). If I applied these questions to myself it is likely that I would be categorized as addicted to the Internet because the personal expectation of friends and family and the expectation of my vocation is that I need to be up to date with my email communication. Ten years ago this was neither a choice nor an expectation. If we applied these IAT questions to watching television, an art or craft, reading, playing board games, an invigorating hobby or exercising, the answers might simplistically suggest we are addicted to anything and everything. (Johnson 2009:10)

The IAT has been taken up readily by some psychological researchers and used as surveys in their subsequent, quantitative studies (e.g. Chang and Law 2008; Morrison and Gore 2010; Ni et al 2009; Spada et al 2008). For many of us, the Internet is an inherent part of our daily operations. If our vocational work networks crashed, many of us would not be able to do any work. Being dependent on technology in the digital age does not mean that we are addicted. We are dependent. Weren't we dependent on the horse and cart some years ago? Aren't most of us

dependent on our car nowadays? Almost all of us are increasingly dependent on our mobile (cell) phones, but are we addicted? We cannot function as we would like without these things. We have made a choice to use these technologies. Technology has shaped us and we have shaped technology (Wajcman 2004).

If the Internet is being used in a problematic way, it is not the Internet itself that is to blame. The Internet is an environment. If a person is constantly viewing pornography online, or gambling online, it is not the Internet that they are addicted to (despite the Internet being a very powerful actor within society), it is what they are doing with the Internet that is the problem, and thus, how it effects their relationships and responsibilities. Perhaps it is more accurate to say they are addicted to sex, or to gambling, not the actual Internet itself. As I stated previously (Johnson 2009), overuse of the Internet in a harmful way can actually be a sign of other problems in our lives, and using the Internet excessively may be a symptom of other, deeper problems (or possible co-morbidity). Consider if you had an obsessive-compulsive disorder, using the Internet would be one way that you could feed and increase the problem to be all consuming. As I found out from Professor Tao Hongkai, who treats Chinese Internet over-users through rational counseling, when many young people stop playing online games (such as World of Warcraft), they have nothing in their real lives, they are bored, they don't have any friends (or social contacts), so of course, it is no surprise that they go back online to at least have some value and purpose. Many people are replacing their unhappy biological lives with meaningful virtual ones, which to me is only a concern if they are no longer functioning as a member of society. Just because it's 'not what we used to do before' doesn't mean it is 'bad'. It is a complex issue, which will only be increased as we continue to become more and more dependent on the Internet in our everyday lives.

I have recently purchased a house and land parcel (8 acres) with my husband. Our sense of agency and empowerment stems almost solely from the Internet. From there, we have been able to identify the appropriate amount of time before letting our 6 hens roam free to reach the status of 'free range hens'. The formal gardens we have inherited are cared for based on our research of rose bush pruning and maintenance. The four paddocks (fields) for our horses are weeded and maintained by what we have found on the Internet. Needless to say, the abundance of eggs has inspired me to bake and cook, therefore the Internet recipes posted by others are invaluable (especially when we need to use the leftover egg whites). My husband and I do not need to contribute to the other Web 2.0 digital insiders' (Goodson et al 2002) posts; we very rarely author and contribute to others' forums, however we benefit enormously via our research, that is, our data-gathering, sifting, and discernment of previously published posts that represent the experiences (knowledges) of others.

If we lived in this same situation prior to the Internet, we would be struggling. We would be more than over-dependent on our neighbors and (most probably) upon my parents and even my grandmother (who are farmers and gardeners, respectively) – none of who are close by. I acknowledge that many city-dwelling readers may find what I am writing as bizarre and foreign, indeed, our location is very private; the neighbors (though friendly) are distant – the atmosphere at night is completely dark and quiet. But, despite my remote locality, I am connected. We are connected. We have the infinite power of the Internet at our fingertips; we are in an ideal space and place (for us). We have the exponential knowledge embedded within cyberspace, but we are located in a provincial, small acreage – a place of little significance to anybody else within the world.

We both depend on the Internet – most predominantly for email whereby we communicate with work colleagues, friends and family. However, it is our escape into current affairs (locally, nationally, internationally). The Internet enables us to share the horrors of natural disasters, the excitement of music, the stimulus of international sport, the banal of daily trivia, yet it allows a degree of sophistication as we both use it to 'map online discourses of knowledge and power' (a 2010-11 research project on which we both work). If this is what we are experiencing in the early stages of 2011, it seems inevitable that the power of the Internet will only continue to become more significant in the everyday lives of people and society in general.

What I have endeavored to picture are lives that are empowered and benefited by the Internet. Through agentic use by critical users, the Internet is significant and an actor within society, which is not only avidly utilized, but is ardently desired. It gives us freedom and flexibility, it gives us a realm and breadth of knowledge, it gives us access to artistic and cultural practice.

We are not Internet addicts. We are Internet dependents. And yet we are empowered because of this use. We are contributing to virtual democracy (Agger 2004).

Consider the virtual social contact and acceptance available to the social outcast within the physical world. An awkward, unpopular individual that does not 'fit' into mainstream society is enabled to be part of a virtual part of society that they wish to inhabit. Their connections, interests and associations are available to them via the world wide web. They are permitted to 'belong'. The cyberself (Agger 2004) can live a 'better' life because of the Internet; yet complexity still remains surrounding the nexus between Internet use and wellbeing (Campbell, Cumming and

Hughes 2006). Nonetheless, those Internet users who create and inhabit safe, virtual spaces enable the physically lonely and dejected (yet technologically-enabled) to challenge stereotypical acceptance only available in physical society through their acceptance and sense of belonging in the virtual one.

Bourdieu's notion of symbolic violence has been aptly defined as the

> ...violence which is exercised upon individuals in a symbolic, rather than a physical way. It may take the form of people being denied resources, treated as inferior or being limited in terms or realistic aspirations. Gender relations, for example, have tended to be constituted out of symbolic violence which has denied women the rights and opportunities available to men (Webb, Schirato and Danaher 2002:xvi).

The Internet does not perform symbolic violence; language does, institutions do. The Internet does not deny resources, it does not treat anyone as inferior (except perhaps those who are digital outsiders), and it does not limit anyone (though certain governments block specified types of websites). While there are hazards that arise as part of any new medium (phishing and identity theft come to mind), the Internet itself is not the problem itself. It is only what we do or not do with the Internet that determines its morality.

Those who do not (choose to) use the Internet or who do not have access to the Internet are the ones who are marginalized. The former are able to make an informed decision.

Consider the recent societal uproar in Egypt (early 2011). Freedom of speech and the ability to communicate virtually to organize physical gatherings was brought to a halt when the Internet was shut down. This represented an attempt to disempower the Egyptian people(s) and their challenge to existing monopolies and information.

Those digital natives who have always been surrounded by the Internet and computing technologies (including Internet-enabled mobile phones) are quickly becoming more savvy, more astute, and more discerning in their critical uptake. They are the ones who will most strongly shape the future of the Web 3.0 Internet, yet this is available to those of us who are digital immigrants. The Internet of the future will enable, empower and make possible even more than we can imagine, giving local insight within global perspectives. They are the digital insiders, the digital explorers, the digital innovators, and the digital shapers.[1]

It seems to me that the use of these two labels that have been the focus of this essay – digital natives and Internet addiction – are actually two current examples of essentialization that inflict symbolic violence on those that some are positioning as 'deviant' or deficit. A thoughtful and critical approach to the everyday language we use is needed.

## Endnotes

1. I did consider including 'digital capitalists' here, but that may be another paper.

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# 'Something for All, So That None May Escape'[1]: Reworking the Critique of Consumption

Christian Garland

Any attempt to renew a serious critique of 'consumerism', or 'consumer society' is faced with a number of major difficulties; foremost of course among these, are the endlessly self-referential tautologies of accepted wisdom on the subject, which have acquired a seeming near-monopoly over existing theoretical explanations and definitions. The purpose of this essay will be to try and offer a few specifically critical perspectives on consumerism and the role this plays in helping reproduce the otherwise fragmented social relations of late capitalist society, with the hope of contributing to reworking and renewing the critique of consumption. Among those issues raised in the course of the essay, it will also be argued that in addition to the alienated practises of consumption for its own sake, a critical comprehension of this same compulsive activity is inseparable from an understanding of how this is essential to the reproduction of the capitalist law of value and the ever-difficult balancing act of maintaining the rate of profit. The antagonistic nature of this analysis should be self-evident, but it can be restated that the aim is to challenge and undermine existing assumptions on the subject. The essay is aware of its limitations on drawing outright conclusions and does not pretend to offer comprehensive treatment of what is a vast subject; instead it aims to raise a number of key critical questions the author hopes in due course will be developed in greater detail.

Societies in which the consumption of material goods came to assume a dominance and visibility previously unimaginable could be said to have only properly appeared in the decades since the end of 1950's post-war austerity, although their origins can obviously be traced back much further. The existing form of society is often described as being consumption-driven, or consumption-led, at least in the hyper-developed regions of the world. This implies a shift or focus away from the previous imperatives of 'production' and 'material' necessity, with their class contradictions and antagonisms manifested on the streets as much as in the factory. The 'affluent society', as some were want to call it initially is one in which the struggle for material existence has apparently been overcome[2], and in which everybody is able to freely participate. This vision of a 'post'- class society has apparently dissolved the former antagonistic social relations (if indeed they ever existed) based on the struggle between opposing interests, by the simple availability of consumer choices on offer. By antagonistic social relations, we are talking about the struggle between classes: between those who control the means of production and command the labour of others and those who must sell their labour in order to survive.[3]

This particular ideological confection is rarely, if ever explicitly articulated, but it is an underlying assumption in most accepted accounts of the type of society we are talking about and that is exemplified by those of the US, or Western Europe. Such societies have frequently been described as exhibiting the features of 'postmodernity', and it is of particular significance that consumption practices, and their emphasis on the fluidity and transience of 'identity', should form such a key part of this description. Existing theories of consumerism sit very comfortably with the postmodern idea of an endless interplay of equivalents, in which everything is relative and becomes more or less equal to everything else, whether referring to a brand of soft drink or a political party: such relativism can be seen as indicative of this postmodern retreat 'inwards', where meaning rather like affect becomes purely a matter of 'individual choice' unconnected to anything more socially decisive. Such a form of society in which 'leisure'

- the dead time of the commodity-form, becomes the defining purpose of economic activity, is what has been called consumerism, or as Fredric Jameson would have it, "the object world of late capitalism'[4]. Late capitalism is perhaps a more useful term than 'consumer society', because it defines its subject in explicitly critical-historical terms, indicting the present era of (over) consumption which tends toward justification by (over) production, in pleasingly unequivocal Marxian language.

On this score, it is worth noting that the socio-economic changes wrought by postmodern consumer capitalism, specifically the tendency toward a 'service-based' or 'information' economy, in no way implies the end of production relations regardless of whether the 'service' being produced is making coffee, or processing information of one kind or another, the better to give competitive advantage to a financial services firm. Such 'post-industrial' or labour is still productive of value, and determined by the same mode of production: that is, capital's need to accumulate and reproduce itself at any cost.

It could certainly be envisioned that human agency, both collective and individual, is capable of more than just shopping - on credit -, after all human beings can remake themselves 'in the world', such 'species-being' in Marx's somewhat unwieldy phrase is the ability to freely recreate our conditions of life, so the claim that such freedom can be observed in the act of consuming, cannot be debunked enough.

Current accepted wisdom views consumer society or 'consumer culture' as it frequently prefers, in extravagantly celebratory terms: virtually every act of consumption by the 'active' consumer is loaded with meaning and significance, which is without exception the expression and exercise of freedom, though this is nearly always in the realm of 'the symbolic'; to take issue with this account is to be either a snotty elitist or simply behind the times. Much of the available literature on consumerism seems to assume post and neo structuralist referents as given, along with the belief that the social world can best be interpreted using a semiotic analysis, however the post-structuralist assumptions of many in the fields of cultural studies, and the sociology of consumption, are unsurprising when considered against the apparent importance of 'identity' as this relates to consumer society. Alternatively, it might be argued that consumer society is "the world of the commodity dominating all that is lived,"[5] where the supposedly 'free choice' of the consumer is in fact another alienated and reified activity without real meaning or purpose. This contention is a virtual anathema to the specialists of consumer culture, but is inescapable for any critical theory of the subject, and deserves serious attention.

## Objectifying the Subject: In the Shadow of the Commodity Form

"A commodity appears, at first sight, a very trivial thing, and easily understood. Its analysis shows that it is, in reality, a very queer thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties."[6] So begins the fourth section of Capital, and Marx's discussion of commodity fetishism. The products of consumer society do indeed abound in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties, being as they are the individual tokens of a society shaped by the law of value and the commodity form. The mundane nature of material objects as straightforward items of necessity that may serve some real need, or as the superfluous and unnecessary junk manufactured and sold merely in order to generate profit is revealed when they are stripped of the mystical aura of supposed uniqueness on which the consumer economy depends.

It seems useful here to explain the term 'consumer economy', seemingly much overlooked by mainstream theorists, and more radical critics alike. In defining 'consumer-driven societies' as those of late capitalism, we are forced to further explain what is meant by this description. We might define 'late capitalism' as the epoch covering the last five decades, in which all social life is now colonised and commodified by the market, which brings into being a world of 'leisure' where the absence of freedom and autonomy over the conditions of life experienced through the wage relation are reproduced in the prescribed range of 'choices' on offer to the consumer: you are free to choose, but only from the set of choices already on offer, the outcomes of which have essentially already been made. The simulacra of 'choice', then ultimately comes down to the freedom to work, to engage in wage labour, and the freedom to buy the products of wage labour. In the words of Tyler Durden the protagonist in Fight Club "We work jobs we hate to buy shit we don't need." The society of consumption is one which demands we work in order to consume and consume if all - or at least most of us - are to work, and it is in this sense that we can speak of a 'consumer economy', though this in no way implies the abandonment of relations of production or their critique. The moment at which the futility of the spheres of work and consumption conjoin, is well illustrated by citing a

reference used by Jean Baudrillard - not normally the best example for a critique of consumption - to Beau Brummell who it was said, when gazing at the beauty of the rural landscape would ask his servant: "Which lake do I prefer?" Such a scene is of course no longer the exclusive preserve of the Regency Dandy and poseur: millions are employed in the process by which the role of Brummell's valet is created, and are then invited to assume the role of Brummell himself, when choosing which brand of shower gel they prefer.

Affluent hyper-developed consumer societies are still capitalist societies after all, and they are still structured by alienated and exploitative social relations, both at the point of production and at the point of consumption. The steady proliferation of popular critiques of consumerism, over the last ten or fifteen years offers ample proof, if proof were needed that all is far from well in the supposed conflict-free world of consumer society. Indeed the number of articles in mainstream psychology journals[7] analysing the associated psychological and emotional problems of members of hyper-developed consumer societies are a further indication of the bleak prospects for those believing that their sense of alienation and meaninglessness, or 'objectless craving' in David Riesman's phrase, is best treated with repeated sessions of 'retail therapy', confusing symptoms with cause.

## Happiness is Just Around the Corner: The Ideology of Consumerism

As Conrad Lodziak has argued, it is possible to speak of an 'ideology of consumerism' which is itself at least partially reflective of standard academic wisdom on the subject, but in keeping with much of the ideological currents of postmodern capitalism, is fluid and in a virtual constant state of flux. There are, however certain basic precepts that are discernable in all variants of this affirmative celebration of consumption. The 'freedom' inherent in being able to choose between six different brands of toothpaste is held up as being freedom in its fullest sense[8], but this is basically a quantified and quantifiable definition of 'freedom' as being limitless 'choice', between what is already on offer: the freedom to reject such false choices by taking what one pleases in order to satisfy a real material need is called theft, and will be met by the full force of the security and police arms of private capital and the state: an alternative would be free, open access allowing all to be able to meet needs no longer enclosed by market relations of private property or manipulated for reproduction of the laws of value and profit.

A second feature commonly shared by most ideological variants of consumerism is the tiresome obsession with 'identity', in which consumers are said to be 'constructing meaning' in a rich "diversity of experience"[9] (sic). Consumerism as a privatistic cell, - that is the purchasing and consumption of material goods as an end in itself - can be seen as a basically socially harmless activity, and hence it is no small coincidence that it is so easily tolerated and accommodated by societies and regimes otherwise hostile to manifestations of what they perceive to be Western modernity, with all that implies for traditional values and sources of authority.

We have so far tried to argue that consumerism is as much about the reproduction of advanced capitalist economies as it is a haphazard reproduction of the otherwise haphazard and extremely fragmented social relations of societies based in large part on consumption, that is, advanced or late capitalism Marxist critiques of consumerism have tended to overlook the economic role played by mass consumption, in favour of the ideological or cultural aspects - partly it would seem, to avoid the accusation of economic determinism. But whilst a crudely economistic, objectivist Marxism is to be rejected, at least by those seeking to develop the critique of consumption from an anti-capitalist perspective, so should the 'culturalist' explanations of consumer societies that have frequently dispensed altogether with any trace of 'materialism', and in the case of many of those associated with the founding of the discipline, to a rejection of Marxism altogether.[10] The need for advanced, hyper-developed capitalist economies to encourage the compulsion to buy for the sake of buying, - replete with references to 'consumer confidence' as reflected in company sales figures, can be seen as an economic imperative, since the 'actually existing' potential for the overcoming of material scarcity, must be arrested and contained, if the capitalist economy is to continue. To be sure, the

Another point worth noting is that although relative affluence may have increased exponentially in the last four decades, this has been accompanied by the outgrowth of credit industries to facilitate increased spending, that would otherwise be unavailable to the majority, were they to rely on real wages.[11] Similarly, technological production's ability to mass produce items for purchase outstrips actual demand for them or rather it would do were it not for the continual supersession of built-in obsolescence, and planned wastage. We should not forget here the economic influence of the planning industries devoted to recording and measuring the metrics of consumption, and the

advertising, marketing and 'branding' sectors equally devoted to ensuring consumers do what is required of them by making a purchase, any purchase, but preferably the more the better.

Parallel to these economic measures, there has been the conspicuous ideological reorienting of popular attitudes to debt, and the promotion of the idea that this is not really such a bad thing after all debt facilitates consumption, and enforces dependency on wage labour. The Anglo-American insistence that being a mortgage slave equals 'owning your own home', and the all but mandatory requirement to take on such a burden, and the acceptance of its noxious proprietary ideology, can also be seen as further evidence of the link between consumption and credit (debt) as a means of social discipline.

It is also interesting to note here the pious, moralistic disapproval that is always heaped on those who find themselves in serious difficulty, and which is never far away, even as the calls to further increase spending are intensified. In effect this is the market-driven each-against-all demand that seeks to place all responsibility for so called 'failure' on the individual, regardless of whether they are actually responsible, or even able to influence factors mostly beyond their control. Such sanctimonious shopkeeper moralism could be glimpsed in the chiding tones of opinion columns in the business and mainstream press alike, following the initial 'sub-prime' mortgage debacle, that helped precipitate the global 'credit crunch': very different styles written for very different audiences, but the message the same: you only have yourselves to blame. This moralism is also apparent in explanations of how the apparently unfathomable dynamics of global capitalism are supposed to work, and how they begin to breakdown - revealing the 'pure science' of economics to be less 'scientific' than first thought. It is useful to mention this moralism since it is an accusation frequently levelled at critics of consumerism by those whose writings have come to constitute accepted academic wisdom on the subject who are usually accused - in addition to being 'elitist' because of their disdain for consumer capitalism - of wishing to impose an ascetic morality on the rest of society.

Although this essay is a long way from offering final 'conclusions' to the central questions it seeks to raise, we have tried to offer a few tentative insights for further critical analyses, which have now been all but completely consigned to the past as museum pieces of only limited historical interest by the guardians of the sub-discipline, in the hope of contributing their further development. The critique of consumption is not based on a desire for asceticism, any more than a critique of populism comes from a standpoint of elitism, what is at stake is the 'vampire-like' power of capital in Marx's phrase, feeding off an increasingly drained and anaemic humanity and an increasingly ravaged planet. The critique of consumerism remains an alarmingly pressing concern for all, and time is not on our side.

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## Endnotes

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2. This remains highly debatable however, depending on the definition of 'overcoming scarcity' that is being used. Hyper-developed capitalism, remains capitalism, in which the majority of people are, in Marx's phrase "the plaything of alien forces", and who are compelled either by market relations or The State to work for a fraction of the value they produce, which is in any case expended in paying for their material survival - always precarious, and even more so in the present neoliberal era.

3. It should be clarified here, that although 'other' oppressions are important too and do indeed count for as much as class, class remains the universal and inescapable commonality of experience that unifies or at least has the potential to unify these differing struggles. To remain within the parameters of what becomes an exclusive identity politics at the expense of class and class struggle is to already betray a comfortable liberal accommodation and assimilation to the existing status quo and to defend it against more far-going critiques.

4. Jameson, F. (1988) Postmodernism and Consumer Society p.9 in The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern 1983-1998 (London: Verso)

5. Debord, G. (1967) Society of the Spectacle (Detroit: Black and Red,) Thesis 37 http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/debord/society.htm

6. Marx, K. (1867, 1995, 1999) The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof, Capital Vol.1 Section 4 http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch01.htm#S4

7.  Consumerism and its Discontents De Angelis., T. (2004) in Monitor on Psychology Volume 35, No. 6 American Psychological Association http://www.apa.org/monitor/jun04/discontents.html

8.  I buy, therefore I am, Jonathan Birchall, Financial Times September 6/7 2008

9.  Consumption and its consequences Miller, D. (1997) in Consumption and Everyday Life ed. MacKay, H. (Milton Keynes: Open University Press)

10.  However, considering that the 'Marxism' of those around Stuart Hall, 'New Times' and the late Centre

for Contemporay Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham was basically of a fairly standard orthodoxy and linked to a faction of the Communist Party of Great Britain, and its 'Marxism Today' party organ, this is hardly something to be mourned.

11. Consumer debt outstrips GDP Victoria Hartley, The Guardian August 22 2008 http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2008/aug/22/debt.consumeraffairs and also Consumers resist pressure on credit Daphne Strauss, Financial Times February 22, 2008, but also interesting is Problem debt hits £25bn Financial Times 16.04.2008

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# Baudrillard in the 21st Century (and after)

Rick Dolphijn

Existence isn't everything. It is a very little thing (among Jean Baudrillard's last written fragments, March, 2007).

## I.    Introduction

Jean Baudrillard continues to exist in our libraries and the poetic spaces of our memories. What may be the fate of this unique thinker in our century and beyond? To probe some of the possible answers to this question I examine 1) some factors which tend to contribute to the durability of any writer, 2) the difficulty in disproving some of Baudrillard's claims (especially concerning simulation), and 3) the fact that perhaps a good deal of Baudrillard's continuing relevance is tied to that of poststructuralism.

## II.    The Durability of Writers and Theorists Generally

Plato is still with us for some good and some accidental reasons. The accidents involve his work's ongoing translation and survival around the world in the centuries immediately following his death. Many writers and thinkers from the Ancient world disappeared slowly over time. Only a few fragments of Heraclitus, one of the most interesting ancient Greek thinkers, survive in to our own time. Many others disappeared in a single event in the great fire at the Library of Alexandria which the Roman Army watched burn to the ground. Along with good fortune the survival of written thought is aided enormously by the fact that a writer's work is considered to be valuable by many in distant lands. This was the case with Plato as his works were not only widely distributed but deeply valued for the insights they provide to a myriad of important philosophical subjects.

Closer to our own time a writer like Shakespeare stands a very good chance of continued survival because of the brilliance of his discourse and the interest level it has sustained in successive generations. Hamlet, Macbeth, King Lear and Richard III are very likely to be staged in the year 3000, 4000, or 5000 as are the surviving works of Aeschylus. As language changes and English becomes less important I suspect that Richard III will be considered an interesting character in say 51st century Mandarin.

As we look across more recent times we see the works of Nietzsche and Marx which stand a good chance of continued relevance for many centuries. Nietzsche's durability will likely be due to the sheer force of his contrarian originality and his sense of the inhuman. Marx is likely to remain relevant because it is difficult to imagine anyone ever doing a thesis on commodities without taking into account the role he played in the times in which he lived. Marx will remain important to scholars, as will Nietzsche, Shakespeare, and Plato as will numerous others because they provide original statements on a number of concepts that are likely to remain important at the methodological and theoretical level for scholars. All of this is predicated on the belief that scholarship will continue to exist, if not thrive, even in the digitized and modeled future into which humanity is propelling itself. Yet many today do not have difficulty imagining, if not a catastrophic end, at least a major event with incredibly negative implications for continued human life and scholarship during the current millennium. From this perspective those who would like to see the universities, libraries, and museums burn are ascending.

Plato, Shakespeare, Marx, and Nietzsche are reasonable examples of thinkers and writers who have survived

into a 23rd, 4th, and 2nd century due to the originality of their work. When we also look at "lesser" thinkers of the 19th century for example, we can also point to the fact that disciplined knowledges also play a role in the continued relevance of a person's thought. While few outside of Sociology, Geography and Demography read Ferdinand Tonnies, his thought is likely to persist for some time as is that of Emile Durkheim. Similarly, political works from the Enlightenment (Voltaire, Rousseau, and Mill) stand a very good chance of being sustained so long as Political Studies continues . What stands the likes of Nietzsche and Marx in even better stead is the fact that their thought is spread across a wide variety of disciplines each of which is melding into the multi and transdisciplinary near future. Indeed, Nietzsche is more important today than he was a century ago in academe. I daresay Derrida will be more important a century from now than he is today (and his current significance is difficult to overstate), due to his relevance to such a wide array of fields. Derrida however comes with a catch and it is a similar problem to the one I assess concerning Baudrillard's continued relevance in Section IV.

## III.   Disproving Baudrillard

Among the reasons for the continued relevance of anyone's thought has to do with its originality and its ability to survive sustained challenges without being disproved. Even after Newton, Einstein, and Hawking, Copernicus is still widely read in the sciences [and in intellectual history and the philosophy of science] because, while many knowledges have super-ceded his claims, he set in motion an entirely new view of the cosmos. Similarly, no matter how the art of painting evolves, Picasso and Braque will be remembered for inventing cubism as an entirely new way of seeing.

What sort of invention or "discovery" did Baudrillard make that is likely to carry his name far into the future? The answer to this question is he length of a book which would include chapters on his understanding of reversibility, symbolic exchange, seduction, impossible exchange, alterity, pataphysics, duality, simulation, and his overall poetic approach to thought and writing (to name only the more prominent). To take one of these by way of example let's examine his thought concerning simulation and its probable endurance well into the future.

Baudrillard was one of a number of thinkers who recognized that all of human culture is the result of the collective sharing in / of simulacra (1990a:50) and that the real "has only ever been a form of simulation" (2003:39). Between 1981 and 2000 he became the preeminent thinker associated with the analysis of simulation. For him, even capital – the one entity to which our entire system is tethered, is nothing more than a very complex simulation (1993a: 36). He also saw the emergence of the bourgeois model of social organization as a gigantic exercise in simulation (which is now attempting to globalize) (1981:41). As activism disappears into referenda, opinion poll data, blogs and tweets, Baudrillard noted that events also disappear into media coverage which scripts the event and covers the outcome before the event even takes place (1988:32). We can think of any major political or economic summit of world leaders and how the event is fed, in advance, through the media processors to know the practices which concern his thought. His favorite example was the first Gulf War which he claimed "did not take place" – "a dead war" (1995:23) – "a war exchanged for the signs of war" (1994b:62). It was, he said: "…war processing, the enemy appears only as a computerized target" (1995:62). He added: "CNN's Gulf War was a prototype of the event which did not take place because it took place in real time, in the instantaneity of CNN …Disney might restage the Gulf War as a global attraction" (2002:151). The proliferation of media simulation of events was troubling to Baudrillard precisely because 24-hour real-time coverage never ends and in-depth analysis never begins. In the case of the Gulf War we are, he said, "well along the way to confusing the war with the model of war" (1983:83-84). Here, our media, which we believe should function as a democratic mechanism of genuine information for debate, are almost entirely given over to positivity and factitiousness (1993c:44) – precisely the kind one would expect from a culture in which advertising has become an epidemic (Ibid.:4).

Simulation is but one concept on which Baudrillard's lasting importance is likely to be tethered. It is also an important concept for how it illustrates his way of thinking which is, in his case, likely to play a role in his continued importance. It is a kind of rigorous optimism which he described in this way:

There is throughout my work something which goes like this: there are always two forms in opposition to each other, the polar opposite of each other... but there isn't any 'explanation' here. There is a type of development which is more like music or at any rate like a rhythm. There is a polarity, opposition between production and seduction, political economy and death, the fatal and the banal. You can't say, though, that this implies the existence of progress.

I have never made any progress; I think everything is already there at the start but an interesting modulation takes place (1993b:201-202).

Simulation is an interesting example of this kind of thinking precisely because of the way that the two forms, moving towards the modulation he describes, take us to an understanding that we can never succumb entirely to simulation. Baudrillard did not believe we had, as yet, fully entered into simulation because when we have entered into it fully we will no longer be able to speak of simulation (1993b:166). We are however advancing further into simulation at an unprecedented pace. One of the hallmarks of our era is what he refers to as the "liquidation of all referentials" (1994a:2) or what we could call the beginning of an endless era without foundations which many analysts have pointed toward for the past thirty years. This is also part of that very familiar feeling we share concerning the unhinging of linear continuity and the kinds of polarities essential to dialectics (Ibid.:16). Many refer to it as the postmodern but Baudrillard found this to be a hollow concept (1993b:22). One of the markers of our progression into simulation involves what he calls "the implosion of meaning" or the collapse of poles of meaning (Ibid.:31). A good example of this is contemporary politics where it is increasingly difficult to distinguish the left from the right as whichever party is in power pursues negative policies (1988:113). The art of government today – government by negative means, by deterrence – involves convincing people of their powerlessness (2002:143). It is a form of governance which well suits the 500 channel television universe, modeled and staged events, and opinion polling. It is government which befits the age of genetics – a form of simulation having reached the point of no return (1990b:172). Baudrillard thus played an equally significant role in the naming of simulation as did Newton in the naming of gravity.

Today Baudrillard says we are in a state of simulation only to the extent that we are obliged to replay all the scenarios because they have taken place already (1993c:4). Our entire system of media and information are being transformed into a gigantic machine for what he calls the "production of the event as a sign" (2001:132). If objects (and objects are at the core of our system), become signs, this is when we will be in simulation true and proper (Ibid.:129). As yet we are merely Baudrillard believes, in a time when only "the principle of simulation governs us" (1993a:2). If we were completely in simulation, according to Baudrillard, we would be in a world from which all reference has disappeared (1993b:165).

Baudrillard's true genius, as concerns simulation, is that his thought is also its nemesis. He argued that the very illusion of the world would prevents us from slipping into simulation – even if that is what we desire to do. What perhaps troubles Baudrillard the most about the eruption of unprecedented levels of simulation in our lives are efforts which confuse simulation with illusion. Here we must tread very carefully because, as we know, the world is understood through the simulation that is language. Indeed, our very ability to understand any "real" world is doubly compounded by the fact that "real", whatever it is, remains hidden beneath an enigmatic realm of appearances (1996a:72). Take for example a simple table which appears to us as flat, cool, motionless, and solid. A physicist can repeat the brilliant theory fiction (for Baudrillard all theory is fiction), in which the table is understood as a mass of swirling atomic structures and substructures. Indeed, the physicist may also point out that the spaces in between the atomic substructures occupy more of what we conceive of as the table than to the atomic substructures themselves. Whatever the "real" table is remains hidden in these swirling atomic masses under the realm of the appearances (which we perceive as flatness, coolness, motionlessness, stability etc.,). The illusion of the world is thus guaranteed, for Baudrillard, by the fact that the real always hides behind appearances and that we "know" it through discourse.

What is properly meant by "simulation" for Baudrillard involves the effort of every systemic organization and operator (including each of us) "to put the illusion of the world to death" and to replace it with "an absolutely real world" (1996a:16). This is a vitally important contribution to philosophy made by Baudrillard – the notion that the real is not the opposite of simulation – the opposite of simulation is illusion. The "real" which is the outcome of discourse and language simulations is merely a "particular case of simulation" (Ibid.:16). If we accept that the "real" is merely a story – what we say it is based on our perceptions of the illusion behind which the real remains hidden – then this makes perfect sense.

As creatures of discourse we should know better than to take appearances, or any discourse on the real for the real, or understand the real as anything but simulation. We should know that simulation is merely a hypothesis – "a game, Baudrillard says, that turns reality itself into one eventuality among others" (2006:92). The problem of simulation for a discursive creature such as humanity, in our time when the highest function of the sign is to make reality disappear, is that at the same time the sign also functions to mask this disappearance (see Baudrillard: 1997:12 ff.).

Baudrillard thus pointed to two related aspects of existence which work to keep simulation at bay: 1) the illusion of the world; and 2) a philosophy [his] that favors enigma over truth. Our first line of defense against tumbling into hyper-simulation is the discursive nature of our interaction with the world. For Baudrillard, given that illusion is the opposite of simulation, when the knowledge industries of the system present us with the demand that we produce the real (simulation) we can respond by making enigmatic that which is clear, and render unintelligible what is only too intelligible. We can make the event itself unreadable, accentuate the false transparency of the world to spread a terroristic confusion about it, and offer a radical disillusioning of the real (1996a:104). For Baudrillard the world which appears to us as enigmatic and unintelligible – is not predestined for "truth" of the kind which produces a "real" world. By seeking illusion we also seek the inner absence of everything to itself – the core of illusion (1997:49). This entails going against screen perceptions in real time which bring to us the definitive end of illusion (1996b:85). Screen culture or "tele-reality" as Baudrillard called it, attempts to end the illusion of thought, of the scene, of passion and entails the end of the illusion of the world and its vision which vanish into tele-reality, into real time, into the virtual, into the opposite of illusion (1996a:33).

And so, ironically, it is our discursive form of interaction with the world which saves us from total simulation. "Objectively", Baudrillard writes, "the world is an illusion: it can only appear to us" (2006:62). In order to understand radical illusion Baudrillard points to an analogue from cosmology:

> ...the light of the stars needs a very long time to reach us; sometimes we perceive it after the star itself has disappeared. This gap between the star as a virtual source and its perception by us... is an inescapable part of the illusion of the world, the absence at the heart of the world that constitutes the illusion" (2000:71).

So illusion (the opposite of simulations of the real), has about it a very subtle reality! As Baudrillard writes elsewhere: "the fact that things are never what they seem to be or what they believe themselves to be, accordingly, the world, likewise, is never what it seems, it presents itself as one thing but is something else, the world plays with us in a manner of speaking, and we have a subjective illusion, the illusion of being a subject, whereas the objective illusion derives from the fact that the world presents itself as one thing, but it is not really this at all (1997:40). The illusion of the world cannot be dispelled (1996a:19) – from its very beginning the world has never been – as realism believes – identical with itself, never real (Ibid.:8). How could it be when we know it via language? The world is an objective illusion which entails the radical impossibility of a real presence of things or beings, their definitive absence from themselves" (2000:70).

Baudrillard, who named simulation to such an extent, also points to a method against simulation. He writes that:

> the task of philosophical thought is to go to the limit of hypotheses and processes, even if they are catastrophic. The only justification for thinking and writing is that it accelerates these terminal processes. Here, beyond the discourse of truth, resides the poetic and enigmatic value of thinking. For, facing a world that is unintelligible and problematic, our task is clear: we must make that world even more unintelligible, even more enigmatic (Ibid.:83).

This understanding of philosophy is not one which seeks to be obscure or to create nonsense but is one which respects the illusion of the world over simulation. Baudrillard's contribution to our understanding of simulation is of such magnitude that we might compare it to Newton's theory of gravity if Newton had also been able to supply us with an understanding of how to counter gravity.

Why would such an imaginative creature as a human prefer simulation over an embrace of the illusory nature of the world? It is one of the more sublime qualities of Baudrillard's writing that he forces us to see ourselves as occupants of an uncertain world where the real hides behind appearances (1998:110). Ours is an existence of unceasing illusion – no matter how much we embrace simulacra the illusion of the world is what prevents us from tumbling all the way into simulation. No matter how we try to perfect the world its imperfections will remain because the world is illusion. This is why Baudrillard chose to be "a weaver of illusions, if illusion is understood… as something which drives a breach into a world that is too known, too conventional, too real" (1996a:71).

While Baudrillard contributed important thought on a number of concepts his writing on simulation alone is likely to guarantee him an existence well into the future – that is, unless simulation can prove him wrong and win out. From the current vantage point, given the hermetic nature of his argument, is seems as likely that gravity will disappear. There is however one event that might lead to the disappearance of Baudrillard and I turn to it in the next section.

## IV.    Is Poststructuralism Forever?

One thing that is likely to advance Baudrillard's writings further into the future is the seeming permanence in theory of what we might term a post structural condition. While some will continue to ignore the loss of faith in capital "T" Truth", capital "M" Meaning, and a capital "R" Real, most theorists have come to accept that truth, meaning, and the real (and here we are especially indebted to Baudrillard), exist only as restricted (non universal) concepts which each of us encounter along our local and restricted horizons. In this, Baudrillard has contributed a series of concepts, as have other poststructuralist thinkers, which may well assure the permanence of their own relevance. From the most radical contemporary perspective it seems unlikely that we are to pass out of our post structural condition anytime soon. If we ever do pass beyond it then thinkers like Baudrillard will most likely lose a good deal of relevance. Still, the likes of Barthes and Baudrillard will probably be remembered for their place in advancing a position in response to 1) the intolerable state of affairs in their own time and, 2) a universe which is completely indifferent to humans and their thoughts.

When will theorists no longer speak the name Baudrillard? I suspect that, like it or not, Baudrillard's writing will continue to be important to scholars throughout and well beyond the 21st century.

Finally, perhaps the most negative answer to the question involves the advancement of our current system: that Baudrillard's thought will be around so long as he is needed by the system. This was one of his greatest frustrations while alive – that our system is so all encompassing that one can only be critical or radical in relation to it. I suppose it is fitting that this intolerable problem follows him into death.

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# Jean Baudrillard's Karl Marx — Productivist Ideology, And The Future of the Left

Gerry Coulter

## Introduction

The grand Marxist promise has ended (Baudrillard, 1985:95).

Marx believed that in economics and its dialectical procedure he found fundamental agency, all he found was what haunts it (Baudrillard, 1993a:237).

The place of Marx's writings in scholarly circles has changed greatly over the past 40 years – the four decades in which Baudrillard published over 40 books. Marx found his way into a significant place in 29 of these texts. Baudrillard's passage through Marx is telling of important developments in intellectual culture in recent times. None of these is any more important than the future of Marx's writings. While many in the West continued to believe that Marx's ideas could provide solutions to capitalist political economy, Baudrillard was among the first on the Left to become deeply dissatisfied with Marx's writings. The break with Marx was an important part of Baudrillard's coming to grips with radical uncertainty – an uncertainty which accelerates and envelopes all of us in the continuing mutations of fast (hyper) capitalism.

For anyone interested in the future of Marx, Baudrillard's encounter with him after 1968 is crucial. Just as Baudrillard was not especially comfortable in the "post-Marxist" world – many scholars who are not fond of Baudrillard have come to recognize that the Marx we have today, for better or worse, is one that has passed through Baudrillard and his contemporaries. This paper hopes to stimulate thought concerning the future of Marx (in post-Baudrillardian times) by examining Baudrillard's writing about Marx(ism) at two levels: 1) His more general challenges to Marx and, 2) his more specific charges concerning Marx's failure to significantly surpass bourgeois analysis. For the Left to survive it is going to have to answer many challenges – among them, on the scholarly side, none are more daunting than those posed by Baudrillard. In my time Baudrillard would become Marx's radical other.

## Baudrillard's General Challenge to Marx

Baudrillard did not believe in the death of Marxist thought. Responding to a question in 1993 he said that Marx's thought "continues to make a difference even though it does not have the impact it once had politically" (Gane, 1993:203). He told the same interviewers that "Marx's analysis was certainly influential upon my work, but I immediately came to question it, became ambivalent about it, and distanced myself from it" (Ibid.:20). He also told François L'Yvonnet that his break with Marx came during the writing of the Mirror of Production (Baudrillard, 2004:20). This is correct but the break is also detectable in his work theorizing our system of objects and the consumer society from 1968-1970.

For Baudrillard the general problem with Marx is that time has, in important ways, passed his analysis by. For my part I have no doubt that Baudrillard would have preferred to live in a time when Marx's writings were fresh and new, when politics had more meaning, and there were more things in which  believe. However, Baudrillard like each of us, had to face the challenges of contemporary life and the revolution of our time which is, as he said so well: "the uncertainty revolution" (1993b:43).

Baudrillard's assessment of Marx is intricately connected to his own quest to embrace the challenge of radicality in uncertain times. This led Baudrillard to write, what were for Marxists, heretical words in his major work on Marx: "Marx is not in an historical position to speak the truth" (1975:117). For Baudrillard, Marx was merely the owner of "a perspective" which was resigned to one view concerning the "laws of history and dialectics" (Ibid.:162). As early as 1973 Baudrillard [who adopted a political detachment even before May 1968] (Baudrillard in Gane, 1993:74), wrote that all of Marx's concepts must be questioned (1975:21), and that what is required is a critique of the structural limits of Marx's assessment (Ibid.:65). All of this, which was so inflammatory for Marxists in the 1970's seems so tame to us today. Baudrillard's passage through Marx has been one of the signs of our times.

At the more general level then, Baudrillard's challenge to Marx is that his writing no longer explains contemporary society. In this, Marx, like all theorists, succumbs to unavoidable reversibility – the inversion which is the fate of every theory and critique (Baudrillard, 1975:50). Baudrillard was also among the first to point out that we had already entered a post-Marxist age (in Gane, 1993:20). For Baudrillard a kind of revolution had taken place in value which Marx's analysis was unable to explain (1993a:6). What he meant by this is that Marx was focused on "classical" value – the more natural stage of use-value and the commodity stage of exchange value. Today value has passed through a structural stage (sign value), and is entering a fractal stage – a point of no reference at all "where value radiates in all directions" (1993b:5). As he told Philippe Petit: "we lost use-value, then good old exchange value, obliterated by speculation, and we are currently losing even sign value for an indefinite signaletics" (1998b:3).

Baudrillard also noted, contra Marx, that "capital has not lurched from one crisis to another (2002:23). In Baudrillard's assessment, Marx was turned away from radical exigency (as were many 19th century thinkers), by the need he felt to devise historical laws (Baudrillard, 1975:161). Marx thus adopted a law of necessity and the idea of perpetual transcendence (Ibid.:61). Post-feudal history is transhistoricized by Marx (universalized) as the class struggle and the mode of production is projected into all of history (Ibid: 47, 67). This mindset, combined with a belief in dialectics, allows Marx to fabricate labour power and production into the equivalent of historical reason working itself out (Baudrillard, 1993a:12). In Marx then, Baudrillard finds the negativity of labour lost as it has been raised to an absolute value (1975:34) and so, within Marx's writing, labour becomes an ideological concept (Ibid.:43). Marx also, says Baudrillard, "eliminates the analysis of ideological labour,"(1981:89) and, in the end, leaves us with an enigma which Baudrillard expresses in the devastating question: "how is surplus value born?" (1975:26).

For Baudrillard, Marx constructed a theory which is "irredeemably partial" (1981:165) lacking a truly "radical analysis of labour and production" (1975:21-51). Among the most vital of the more general problems Baudrillard had with Marx is that "ideological priority is given to exchange value" (Ibid.:24). Marx thus fails to conceive of social wealth being founded by other than labour and production (Ibid.:29). Marx's writing is thus incapable of doing that which it promises – theorizing total social practice (Ibid.:152) and is entirely incapable of "responding to a social process that far exceeds material production" [such as contemporary mass media] (1981:165-66). Baudrillard thus radically departs with Marx in developing his own understanding of the importance of symbolic exchange. For Baudrillard symbolic exchange concerns reversibility – the fact that all systems eventually tend to break down as the result of their own success – and operates at a radically different level than Marx's understanding of exchange value (1975:51). Capitalism itself is not the product of the failure of feudalism but of its success. It is not dialectics that will end capitalism in Baudrillard's view, but only capitalism itself that can end capitalism. As for dialectics, in our time of hypertelia, proliferation, and indeterminacy, they are finished for Baudrillard. Transcendence, that most urgent Marxist concept, is no longer viable (2001:51). For Baudrillard, the world no longer has a chance of escape into an upper realm of Truth, God, the Law, or the Idea, but merely the lower reaches of immanence (1990:86). This is one of the more problematic aspects of our time which make it so unbearable (2005:25).

Baudrillard also questions the place of freedom in Marx's analysis. He says that for Marx, freedom is based on the domination of nature (a very capitalist idea) (1975:67), and that Marx makes a promise of liberation out of what is (and has repeatedly been shown to be since Marx's time) "a process of repression" (Ibid.:154). What happens with Marx, and Marxists who follow him, is that a great irony occurs – those who seek to revolutionize class struggle actually put an end to it "burying it under a theoretical project" (1987:13). It is this very contingent, determinist, universalized theoretical project – ideologically committed to productivism via labour and man's command of nature, that leads us, in Baudrillard's assessment, to the deeper and more specific problem with Marx: his failure to provide

an alternative to productivism (1981:90).

## Marx's Failure to Provide An Alternative To Capitalism

Baudrillard ultimately finds Marx able to offer a wide ranging criticism of capitalism in his own time but one which lacks the kind of radicality we need today. And, even in his analysis of his own time, Marx is further charged with misunderstanding some of the capitalist formations then extant (1975:106 ff). It is, in Baudrillard's terms, the "production of the production system" which escapes Marx (Ibid.:66). Baudrillard has a very good point here as in Marx there is a constant assumption (it is intrinsic to his understanding of labour and nature), that production is taken for granted – what is wrong is merely how it is organized. Marx's thought is infected with the virus of the past 500 years – a commitment to productivist ideology. Baudrillard quite rightly gets to the core of some very important implications of Marx's thought – especially the obvious fact that production (as a form) is not subjected by Marx to radical analysis (Ibid.:20). Baudrillard says that Marx has kind of "theoretical allergy to everything that isn't material production and productive labour" (1981:167). Marx's theory is, for Baudrillard, one that "analyzes the social field that it produces" (1993a:221-22).

This leads Baudrillard to a series of insights concerning Marx, which were for a time in the 1970's and 1980's, distinctive to him as a theorist. Baudrillard's radical challenge to Marx is that his perspective suffers (along with a commitment to productivism and over-determination of man as producer (1975:31-32)), the same humanist virus which bourgeois thought shares (Ibid.:49). Marx's very analysis, despite itself, is charged by Baudrillard with "assisting the cunning of capital", "contributing to the capitalist mythology", and "reproducing the system of political economy" (1975:31; 1981:134). In its commitment to continued productivism (post revolution), Marxism finds itself ironically in the same position as bourgeois economics (1981:115). By centering itself (from the Paris Manuscripts of 1844 onwards (Marx, 1977)) on "man's productive vocation" (Baudrillard, 1981:36), Marx's assessment of capitalist society succumbs to a dialectic and Christian ethic which produces a critique which is not radical, but rather, plays a key role in reproducing the existing system of political economy (Ibid.:36-37). It is difficult to argue with Baudrillard on this point as every single authority which attempted to bring about a revolution based on Marx's ideas did indeed reproduce a state-capitalist version of capitalist political economy (Ibid.:67).

Beyond this devastating problem, Baudrillard says that Marx was unable to foresee "that capital would, in the face of an immanent threat to its existence, launch itself into an orbit beyond the relations of production, and political contradictions, to make itself autonomous, to totalize the world in its own image" (1993b:10). Baudrillard here describes our contemporary condition as "transeconomic"… "where classical economics gets lost in pure speculation" (2000:52). For Baudrillard then, Marx makes the mistake of attempting to offer a radical critique of political economy in the form of political economy (1975:50). What Marx does then, is to produce not a radical alternative to productivism – but merely the mirror of capitalist production (Ibid.:152). Marx's illusion, and all writing ultimately succumbs to illusion for Baudrillard, is that he believed in the "possibility of revolution within the system" (1993a:35). This leaves us with the difficult fact that Marx's theory, when we cut it to the bone as Baudrillard does, "never stopped being on the side of capitalism" (Baudrillard in Genosko, 2001:95). This is because Marx's thought "retains concepts which depend on the metaphysics of market economy" (1975:59). Marx and his followers were thus never able to go beyond capitalism (some form of state capitalism based on productivism) and a range of neo-Christian and humanist understandings of labour. In the contemporary Baudrillard finds those who were to be the heroes of the revolution turned into the silent but tired anti-heroes of consumption (1998a:182).

## Conclusion

Among the insights we gain from Baudrillard's writings on Marx is that capital (its historical function) produces the social. In this Marx was right. But when the objective determinations of capital lose their force, Baudrillard correctly points out: "the social will not overcome capital according to some dialectical movement". Importantly for Baudrillard, this means that the Left died "of the same causes as power" (Baudrillard in Genosko, 2001:97). This is also why 'Left' and 'Right' have largely disappeared as useable categories and why we have become increasingly dissatisfied with (and indifferent to) them. If we take Baudrillard's understanding of Marx to its logical conclusions – we can provocatively say that the Left was never really anything more than a prosthesis of the right (Ibid). All the Left

seems able to do now, especially in the age of ecological-correctness, is play the sad role of "setting up models of pacified socialization" (1993a:173). This has become, pathetically, the fate of numerous progressives (including many unionists, feminists, and environmentalists) who seek to revive public morality or pitifully beg at the knee of the Law. Others merely remain "stuck in denunciation" (2002:206). As much as the Left persists at all it does so in many ways as a last vestige of Marx – defunct and "spontaneously doing the work of the right" (1994:16). The children of 1968 have gone over to ecological efforts to prolong capitalist expansion and serve productivism in new ways.

Another implication of our post-Marx(ist) condition is that we are left with a circumstance in which "people are no longer fighting alienation but a kind of dispossession" (1998b:19). We are no longer combating the spectre of alienation, but that of hyper-reality (1996:66). Baudrillard did not like our contemporary condition but he did his best to thrive as a thinker and a writer while coming to grips with its radical uncertainty. Writing, beyond the political, after any possibility of transcendence, was his post-Marxist politics. As he said with such heart rendering poignancy for a Parisian man of the Left of his generation: "there are no children of May" (Baudrillard in Genosko, 2001:74).

Is a post-Marxist, post-Baudrillardian Marxism possible? Of course not. But those on the Left who in earlier times might have been Marxists can now, through a serious engagement with Baudrillard, challenge the productivist ideology on which Marx foundered and capitalism continues to proliferate.

Through a serious engagement with Baudrillard's challenge to Marx the Left can find its last chance to be truly radical.

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# Setting, Speaking, and Framing in the News Discourse of Elected Executions: A Play in Three Acts

C. Lee Harrington, Heather Reece, Glenn W. Muschert

## I.   Introduction

This manuscript takes a dramaturgical approach to the study of elected executions (hereafter EEs), or the not-uncommon cases in which those sentenced to death take legal steps to hasten their own executions. In a prior manuscript based on nearly 30 years of national (Associated Press) news coverage of EEs, we identified two dominant frames used by print news journalists in this context, choice and competency, and explored the frames' impact on inmates' decision-making processes and on public perception of EEs (Muschert, Harrington and Reece 2009). In this manuscript we draw on the same data set to examine the more nuanced question of how journalists establish broader cultural authority over EEs through their narrative constructions of the phenomenon. That is, by linking various social actors to various social settings when employing different frames in news reporting, what larger story or drama are journalists telling about EEs? Our approach extends recent scholarship that (re)-introduces issues of power and politics into capital punishment debates (see Culver 1999; Jacobs and Carmichael 2002; Jacobs and Kent 2007; Kubik and Moran 2003; Langbein 1999) and into framing research (Carragee and Roefs 2004) by addressing a question at the informal political level – how cultural authority over EEs is established through routine journalistic practices. We begin by summarizing recent developments in the status of capital punishment in the US, including the phenomenon of EEs, followed by a review of the relevant scholarly literature that helps contextualize our research.

**Capital Punishment in the US**

The status of capital punishment in the US has undergone significant transition in the past decade. While the average number of executions per year was higher between the years 2000-2007 (n=5) than between 1973-1999 (n=3.1), the number of death sentences per year has dropped dramatically since 1999. For example, the 111 death sentences imposed in 2008 were the lowest since reinstatement of capital punishment in 1976 and represented a 63% decline over the past decade (Death Penalty Information Center, http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/documents/ FactSheet.pdf, accessed January 4, 2010). Reasons for declining executions are myriad, including the economic cost of the death penalty in the context of a global recession (Grinberg 2009), lingering concerns about the lethal injection process (Associated Press November 14, 2009), lack of empirical support for the death penalty's deterrence effect (Kovandzic, Vieraitis and Boots 2009), and continuing questions of innocence (Dieter 2009). The 2006 Gallup Poll found that only 65% of Americans support the death penalty, down from a high of 80% in 1994, and when offered the choice of life without parole instead of the death penalty only 47% support the death penalty.

Our focus is on death row inmates who elect to hasten their own execution, an under-studied and under-publicized aspect of the larger national debate over capital punishment. There were 133 "successful" cases of EEs in the US between 1976 and 2009, representing 11% of the total population of executed inmates (DPIC, http:// www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/documents/FactSheet.pdf, accessed January 4, 2010). While some might view EEs as

unproblematic, simply the accelerated imposition of a pre-determined sentence, there is a lively debate in the socio-legal literature over their legal and ethical implications. Since executions are typically hastened through inmates' decisions to waive final (habeas) appeals, a major area of concern is the actual voluntariness of such decisions given deplorable conditions on death row (e.g. Strafer 1983), concomitant concern about inmates' mental health status (e.g. Blume 2005), and related questions about the reliability of competence assessment instruments (e.g. Nicholson and Norwood 2000).[1] Additional areas of concern include the implications of transforming an adversarial legal process into a consensual or cooperative one (e.g. Dieter 1990) and the appropriate duties of mental health professionals and defense counsel in this unusual legal context (e.g. Harrington 2000; Wallace 1992). As noted, our interest is in how EEs are framed by the media (our prior study), and how framing practices help establish broader cultural authority over the phenomenon of EEs (our present study).

Below we review two discourses on capital punishment that help inform this project, followed by a discussion of dramaturgical (constructionist) approaches to social problems. Given space restrictions, both discussions are necessarily brief.

### Scholarly Discourses about Capital Punishment

The first relevant discourse focuses on the death penalty, politics, and the policy-making process. Nearly 15 years ago Dieter warned that the "political promotion of capital punishment by those responsible for interpreting and implementing the law interferes with the right to a fair hearing and increases the likelihood that innocent defendants will be executed" (1996: 1-2). Focusing on the relationship between appointed and elected judiciary and death determinations, Dieter cautions that "the infusion of the death penalty into political races is reaching new extremes and distorting the criminal justice system" (1996: 1). Other scholars writing in this tradition include: Culver (1999), who focuses on state-level intra-institutional conflict that impacts death penalty policy-making (see also Langbein 1999); Jacobs and Carmichael (2002), who explore the social and political forces that make capital punishment legal in some jurisdictions but not others; Kubik and Moran (2003), who examine the impact of gubernatorial politics on the execution stage; and Jacobs and Kent, who find that "national level Republican strength [and] presidential elections that emphasize law and order" increase yearly executions (2007: 297).

In the context of EEs, questions of informal political influence are raised by multiple scholars including Bonnie who suggests that "the death penalty is unique not only in its severity as a punishment but also in its tendency to distort the roles played by all participants in the process" (1990: 69), and Harrington (2004), who explores how mutual distrust between the prosecution and the defense might impact courts' determination of inmate competency to waive final appeals and proceed to execution. In short, the capital punishment literature suggests that all stages of capital cases, from sentencing to execution, are subject to political influences both formal and informal. Our interest in how cultural authority over EEs is established through journalistic practices furthers knowledge on informal political influences on capital punishment.

A second relevant scholarly discourse focuses on capital punishment and the media, which is a surprisingly under-developed research area given that most of us know what we know about capital punishment from media sources rather than first-hand. Most extant research focuses on the media's impact on homicide deterrence (e.g. Jacoby et al. 2008; Stack 2007). Additional research areas include the news media's role in normalizing executions for the public (e.g. Greer 2006; Lipschultz and Hilt 1999; Niven 2004), the role of fictionalized entertainment programming in capital punishment debates (Sarat 2001; Wardle and Gans-Boriskin 2004), and the relationship between news content and public support for the death penalty (e.g. Fan, Keltner and Wyatt 2002). Of most relevance to this manuscript is our own prior study of how EEs are framed by US print news media (Muschert et al. 2009). Drawing on the data set described below, we found that journalists' construction of two binary frames (choice and competency) fits "dominant norms of news construction" in that "binary concepts almost without exception have moral power, which gives them both a resonance with the mass public and a sustaining news value" (Coe et. al, 2004: 235, 237; see also Greer 2006). These binary frames are consistent with the socio-legal literature which tends to discuss EEs through a dominant discourse of volunteering (suggesting a positive framing of EEs) and a minority discourse of suicide (suggesting a negative framing of EEs; Harrington 2000). In terms of the larger national debate on capital punishment, a volunteering/choice frame tends to support the inmate's desire for swift execution, thus aligning with pro-death penalty activists, while a suicide/competence frame tends to question the inmate's intentions and/or mental health, thus aligning with death penalty abolitionists (Harrington 2000, 2004; Muschert, et al 2009). Here, we go beyond this analysis to consider journalists' selection of frames in the context of both setting and speaking, with

interest in how these practices help establish broader cultural authority over EEs.

## The Dramaturgy of Executions: A Constructionist Approach to Framing

Our project also draws on the small body of literature that takes a dramaturgical approach to social issues. Drawing on Erving Goffman's (1959) seminal work on the ongoing, interactional construction of social meaning(s) through everyday performance, the dramaturgical literature explores ritualistic dimensions of social problems and/ or social movements. As Benford and Hunt (1992) explain, "social movements can be described as dramas in which protagonists and antagonists compete to affect audiences' interpretations of power relations in a variety of domains" (1992: 38). Viewing contested events as dramas allows the researcher to focus on the constituent parts, including the cast of characters and the stages on which they interact. In the context of capital punishment, Lofland (1975) utilized the dramaturgical approach to compare historical (open) executions with modern (closed) ones (see Foucault [1977] for a discussion of the pre-modern performance of capital punishment). More recently, Miller and Hunt (2008) build on Lofland through examination of 500+ newspaper reports, suggesting that "[e]xecutions are the final act in a series of dramatic events" that include discovery of the crime, the criminal investigation, the trial, the appeals, and the final execution (2008: 189). Focusing on newspaper announcements as the "denouement" of executions, the authors find that "the construction of the majority of execution stories implies that the death sentence is a proper closure to a string of criminal and legal events" (2008: 208). In general, they conclude that little has changed about the dramaturgy of executions since Lofland's 25-year-old study (2008: 209; see also Conquergood 2002).

Miller and Hunt eliminated cases of EEs from their database to avoid outliers though they suggest that a comparison with EEs is warranted (2008: 209). Furthermore, the socio-legal framing of inmates who elect executions as volunteers is itself intriguing in that it re-casts the clear antagonist in the drama of capital punishment – the convicted criminal – as a would-be protagonist instead, proceeding willingly to his or her death (we return to this point later). While our data was collected prior to the publication of Miller and Hunt's article and thus is not a direct reply to their suggested research agenda, we believe our findings can help deepen scholars' understanding of how the rituals of EEs (as framed by journalists) are shaped by larger cultural narratives of capital punishment.

In journalism, one often hears about the axiomatic five-W's: who, what, where, when, why, and how. One element of a drama that is crucial to understanding the context in which events and speech occur is to set the stage by specifying the location. Meaning is conveyed within the context of its physical and social settings, something noted by ethnomethodological (e.g. Eglin 1980; Eglin and Hester 2003: 19-21) and dramaturgical (e.g. Benford 1992) scholars. As journalists select settings for the stories they tell, they are in fact offering a type of context for the meanings of the actions and dialogues they describe. Indeed, scholars in mass communication have acknowledged the importance of settings in news discourse, particularly as selection of settings can convey something about where the story takes place, and thus whom it impacts and concerns (Chyi and McCombs 2004; Muschert and Carr 2006). Analytical attention to the settings of news stories may help identify the "where" axiomatic in journalistic practice. Journalists' selection of setting may in fact reflect an underlying schema related to how they interpret the events they report upon. Once a setting is established, "story characters appear on cue" (Eglin and Hester, 2003: 13-27; Sacks 1992: 254), including protagonist(s) and antagonist(s) as journalists select participants to act and speak in their reportage. Identifying the speakers (and combinations of speakers) selected by journalists to discuss various aspects of EEs may help to identify the "who" axiomatic in journalism.

Knowing who speaks (and where) ultimately allows us to consider how cultural authority over EEs is constructed via print news sources and how that construction might change over time as an inmate discursively journeys from crime to execution. Benford and Hunt (1992) suggest that dramaturgical frameworks in a social movement context serve to construct and communicate various interpretations of power: "What is it? Who has it? Who doesn't? How is it wielded? Who ought to have it? How should it be used?" (1992: 37). Furthermore, media framing itself does not occur in a political or power vacuum (Carragee and Roefs 2004: 215) and is particularly crucial to explore in the context of capital punishment since, as noted earlier, it is the only source of knowledge about the topic for most of us. In this manuscript, we explore the changing cast of characters that journalistically tell the story of EEs in the US. Following the spirit of the dramaturgical approach, we present our findings in the form of a three-act play, returning in the conclusion to larger considerations about power and cultural authority in this unusual legal context. We emphasize that our study is limited to a content (textual) analysis of US print news media – we do not have empirical data on journalists' intentions or readers' interpretations.

We note that a dramaturgical approach is wholly consistent with a sociological (constructionist) approach to

framing. We are mindful of Van Gorp's recent article pointing to the vague usage of framing terminology in scholarly writings – "In a way, frames seem to be everywhere, but no one knows where exactly they begin and where they end" (2007: 62). We follow his approach, rooted in Goffman, that a frame is "an invitation or incentive to read a news story in a particular way" (2007: 63), that frames manifest themselves through "word choice, metaphors, exemplars, descriptions, arguments, and visual images" (2007: 64), that framing is a dynamic process subject to negotiation (2007: 64), that frames are a form of metacommunication with their own logic and meaning (2007: 65), and that "a frame that is applicable only to one particular issue [such as elected executions], in fact is preferably linked to another, more abstract 'master' frame [such as capital punishment]" (2007: 67). We return to this point in the conclusion.

## II.  Method

To understand journalists' selection of settings and speakers in the discourse of EEs, we identified all cases of EEs occurring between 1977 and 2006 listed on the Death Penalty Information Center's website, as illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Elected Executions by US States

| State | Year of Legal Reinstatement | Year of First Execution | Executions since Reinstatement | Elected Executions since Reinstatement | Rate of Elected Executions |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| AK | Not Reinstated | | | | |
| AL | 1976 | 1983 | 34 | 4 | 11% |
| AR | 1973 | 1990 | 27 | 4 | 15% 5% |
| AZ | 1973 | 1992 | 22 | 3 | 14% |
| CA | 1973 | 1992 | 13 | 2 | 15% |
| CO | 1977 | 1997 | 1 | 0 | 0% |
| CT* | 1973 | 2005 | 1 | 1 | 100% |
| DE* | 1974 | 1992 | 14 | 4 | 29% |
| **FL** | **1972** | **1979** | **60** | **9** | **14%** |
| GA | 1973 | 1983 | 39 | 0 | 0% |
| HI | Not Reinstated | | | | |
| IA | Not Reinstated | | | | |
| ID* | 1973 | 1994 | 1 | 1 | 100% |
| IL* | 1974 | 1990 | 12 | 2 | 17% |
| IN* | 1973 | 1981 | 17 | 5 | 29% |
| KS | 1994 | n/a | 0 | | |
| **KY** | **1975** | **1997** | **2** | **1** | **50%** |
| LA | 1973 | 1983 | 27 | 0 | 0% |
| MA | Not Reinstated | | | | |
| MD* | 1975 | 1994 | 5 | 1 | 20% |
| ME | Not Reinstated | | | | |
| MI | Not Reinstated | | | | |
| MN | Not Reinstated | | | | |
| MO | 1975 | 1989 | 66 | 4 | 6% |
| MS | 1974 | 1983 | 7 | 0 | 0% |
| MT | 1974 | 1995 | 3 | 1 | 33% |
| NC | 1977 | 1984 | 43 | 4 | 9% |

| ND | Not Reinstated | | | | |
|----|----------------|------|----|----|------|
| NE | 1973 | 1994 | 3 | 0 | 0% |
| NH | 1991 | n/a | 0 | | |
| NJ | 1982 | n/a | 0 | | |
| NM* | 1979 | 2001 | 1 | 1 | 100% |
| NV* | 1973 | 1979 | 12 | 10 | 83% |
| NY | 1995 | n/a | 0 | | |
| OH* | 1974 | 1999 | 23 | 6 | 25% |
| OK | 1973 | 1990 | 81 | 7 | 8% |
| OR* | 1978 | 1996 | 2 | 2 | 100% |
| PA* | 1974 | 1995 | 3 | 3 | 100% |
| RI | Not Reinstated | | | | |
| SC | 1974 | 1985 | 36 | 7 | 19% |
| SD | 1979 | n/a | 0 | | |
| TN | 1974 | 2000 | 2 | 0 | 0% |
| **TX** | **1974** | **1982** | **374** | **25** | **7%** |
| UT* | 1973 | 1977 | 6 | 4 | 67% |
| VA* | 1975 | 1982 | 97 | 8 | 8% |
| VT | Not Reinstated | | | | |
| WA* | 1975 | 1993 | 4 | 3 | 75% |
| WI | Not Reinstated | | | | |
| WV | Not Reinstated | | | | |
| WY | 1977 | 1992 | 1 | 0 | 0% |

**Source:** Death Penalty Information Center, www.deathpenaltyinfo.org, accessed August 27, 2006.
**Note:** States examined in the present study are boldface.

*\*States in which the first execution after lift of moratorium was elected by the inmate.*

By examining all cases of EEs in six states, the study identified a sub-set of cases representative of the 26 states that have carried out EEs. Selection criteria for states including identifying those with high rates of execution (Florida, Nevada, and Texas), those who resumed executions in both earlier and later decades (Florida, Nevada, and Texas vs. Kentucky, New Mexico, and Ohio), states whose first-in-jurisdiction execution was elected (Nevada, New Mexico, and Ohio), states with high rates of EEs (Nevada and New Mexico), and states from various regions of the country (two from the West, one from the Midwest, and three from the South). In all, the study examines 52 of the 125 EEs in six US states between 1979 and 2006, as illustrated in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Inmates Who Elected Execution in Selected States

| Inmate | Year Sentenced | Year Executed | Race/ Ethnicity | Gender | AP Articles | Articles about EEs |
|--------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|--------|-------------|--------------------|
| **TEXAS** | | | | | | |
| Stephen Peter Morin | 1981 | 1985 | W | M | 13 | 11 |
| Charles Rumbaugh | 1975 | 1985 | W | M | 15 | 15 |
| Jeffrey Allen Barney | 1981 | 1986 | W | M | 0 | 0 |
| Ramon Hernandez | 1980 | 1987 | L | M | 0 | 0 |
| Elisio Moreno | 1983 | 1987 | L | M | 0 | 0 |

| Jerome Butler | 1986 | 1990 | B | M | 5 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| James Smith | 1983 | 1990 | B | M | 4 | 3 |
| Anthony Cook | 1988 | 1993 | W | M | 2 | 2 |
| Richard Lee Beavers | 1986 | 1994 | W | M | 4 | 4 |
| George Lott | 1992 | 1994 | W | M | 14 | 3 |
| Esequel Banda | 1995 | 1995 | L | M | 2 | 2 |
| Leo Jenkins | 1988 | 1996 | W | M | 6 | 3 |
| Joe Gonzales | 1992 | 1996 | L | M | 2 | 2 |
| Richard Brimage Jr. | 1988 | 1997 | W | M | 3 | 3 |
| Benjamin Stone | 1980 | 1997 | W | M | 4 | 4 |
| Steven Renfro | 1996 | 1998 | W | M | 7 | 7 |
| Aaron Foust | 1997 | 1999 | W | M | 0 | 0 |
| Charles Tuttle | 1995 | 1999 | W | M | 1 | 1 |
| Richard Wayne Smith | 1992 | 1999 | W | M | 13 | 10 |
| Robert Atworth | 1996 | 1999 | W | M | 4 | 2 |
| Larry Hayes | 1999 | 2003 | W | M | 0 | 0 |
| Ynobe Matthews | 2000 | 2003 | B | M | 7 | 7 |
| Peter Miniel | 1986 | 2004 | L | M | 10 | 9 |
| James Porter | 2000 | 2005 | W | M | 13 | 13 |
| Alexander Martinez | 2001 | 2005 | L | M | 10 | 10 |
| **NEVADA** | | | | | | |
| Jesse Bishop | 1977 | 1979 | W | M | 68 | 57 |
| Carroll Cole | 1981 | 1985 | W | M | 0 | 0 |
| William Paul Thompson | 1989 | 1989 | W | M | 5 | 5 |
| Sean Patrick Flannagan | 1987 | 1989 | W | M | 0 | 0 |
| Thomas Baal | 1988 | 1990 | W | M | 9 | 9 |
| Roderick Abeyta | 1989 | 1998 | L | M | 9 | 7 |
| Sebastian Bridges | 1998 | 2001 | W | M | 17 | 15 |
| Lawrence Colwell Jr. | 1995 | 2004 | W | M | 25 | 23 |
| Terry Jess Dennis | 1999 | 2004 | W | M | 21 | 19 |
| Daryl Mack | 2002 | 2006 | B | M | 21 | 16 |
| **FLORIDA** | | | | | | |
| Michael Durocher | 1983 | 1993 | W | M | 0 | 0 |
| Dan Hauser | 1996 | 2000 | W | M | 7 | 7 |
| Edward Castro | 1988 | 2000 | L | M | 12 | 11 |
| Rigoberto Sanchez-Velasco | 1988 | 2002 | L | M | 29 | 29 |
| Aileen Wournos | 1992 | 2002 | W | F | 120 | 77 |
| Newton Slawson | 1990 | 2003 | W | M | 7 | 6 |
| Paul Hill | 1994 | 2003 | W | M | 197 | 53 |
| John Blackwelder | 1983 | 2004 | W | M | 25 | 21 |
| Glen Ocha | 2000 | 2005 | W | M | 6 | 6 |
| **OHIO** | | | | | | |
| Wilford Berry | 1986 | 1999 | W | M | 73 | 58 |
| Stephen Vrable | 1989 | 2004 | W | M | 22 | 22 |
| Scott Mink | 2001 | 2004 | W | M | 14 | 12 |

| Herman Dale Ashworth | 1996 | 2005 | W | M | 20 | 19 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rocky Barton | 2003 | 2006 | W | M | 15 | 12 |
| Darrell Ferguson | 2003 | 2006 | W | M | 14 | 11 |
| **KENTUCKY** | | | | | | |
| Edward Lee Harper | 1982 | 1999 | W | M | 21 | 20 |
| **NEW MEXICO** | | | | | | |
| Terry Clark | 1987/1996 | 2001 | W | M | 182 | 120 |

**Source:** Death Penalty Information Center, www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/executions.php, accessed August 27, 2006.

The data were comprised of articles from the Associated Press (AP), which receives reports from 1,500 papers throughout the United States and serves 121 countries (Associated Press, n.d.), and is a source for stories through the regional, national and, international lenses. Articles were identified using keyword searches of the LexisNexis database by the full name of each inmate, limited to the time frame from the start of the year of conviction through one month following execution. In all, 942 articles were identified, and these were culled to retain the 749 documents discussing EEs. The data includes only those inmates whose efforts to hasten execution were successful, as no database systematically tracks inmates who indicate a desire for swift execution but later change their minds or those who are found mentally incompetent to proceed to execution.

Coding follows the ethnographic content analysis approach advocated by Altheide (1987, 1996). The unit of analysis is the article and the full text of each article was examined numerous times during the coding process. Through immersion in the data (Glaser and Strauss 1967), we identified major thematic elements in the news discourse (van Dijk, 1988). To ensure inter-coder reliability, we conducted tests using Scott's π, a statistic which controls for inter-coder agreement likely to occur by chance (Scott 1955). Pre-tests and post-tests of coding reliability indicated highly reliable coding along a variety of continua, as follows: whether articles were problematic/non-problematic (pre-tests observed 42.2% inter-coder agreement, π-value 0.80, while post-tests returned inter-coder agreement of 97.8%, π-value 0.93); and along locations dimensions(pretests observed agreement of 65.0%, π-value 0.58, while post-tests returned agreement of 98.0%, π-value 0.98). Along the speakers dimension, the pretest returned an agreement of 56.9%, and the post-test returned an inter-coder agreement of 97.7%, the non-discrete coding with which cannot be assessed in terms of Scott's π.

We first identified whether articles were problematic or contested, when the issue of inmates' electing executions is questioned and treated as non-routine, or not problematic, when nothing in the article raises concerns about inmates' electing execution. Of the 749 articles about EEs, 341 (45.5%) discussed EEs as problematic while 408 (54.5%) treated EEs as non-problematic. We further identified the settings and speakers selected by journalists as they write about EEs. The setting is the scene where the action takes place and coding along this dimension was discrete. The speakers are those selected by the journalists to speak directly or in paraphrase. A speaker is defined by their dominant role. Categories for speaker were non-discrete in that articles could include more than one speaker. However, coding was discrete in the sense that a single speaker can only belong to a single speaker type. A word of caution is warranted: the examination of news reportage allow us to understand those settings and characters selected by journalists as they write about EE, and we are unable to make reliable statements about who actually participates in the discourse surrounding EEs. Rather, we reliably identify narrative elements that journalists covering the events deem important.

## III.   Findings

### Setting and Speaking about Elected Executions

Our analysis identifies the primary settings and speakers selected by journalists as they write about EEs. While some combinations of settings and speakers are more frequently evoked when EEs are contested, there are other combinations that appear more commonly when EEs are normalized or not contested. We present the findings

below and explore implications in the Discussion and Conclusion.

*Settings:* When describing the events relating to the cases, journalists tended to select one of six settings as described in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Settings Evoked in the Discourse of Elected Executions

| Settings | Description | Proportion | Problematic? Yes | Problematic? No |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scene of Crime | Occurring in the past, relating the details of the crime. | 9.1% (68) | 31% (21) | 69% (47) |
| Courtroom | Legal proceedings relevant to the specific case, legal arguments occurring in the judges' chambers, courtrooms, and other legal arenas. | 34.0% (225) | 54% (138) | 46% (117) |
| Prison | Occurring within the correctional setting, not involving the final preparations for the execution. | 9.1% (68) | 47% (32) | 53% (36) |
| Governor's Office | In the Governor's office, or in settings where the governor acts with direct authority. | 7.1% (53) | 58% (31) | 42% (22) |
| Death Chamber | The immediate temporal/physical preparations for execution, including moving to the final holding cell, last meal, last rites, final words, and the actual execution. | 27.5% (206) | 31% (64) | 69% (142) |
| Outside Prison | Protests or other actions occurring immediately outside the prison. | 2.5% (19) | 63% (12) | 31% (7) |
| Other | Any article not about specific details of the case, legal procedures not related to the specific inmate, discussion of some aspect not related to elected executions, and meta-debates, such as a discussion about capital punishment in general or other social issues. | 10.7% (80) | 54% (43) | 46% (37) |

Those settings where the largest proportion of articles normalized EEs were the scene of the crime and the death chamber, both of which presented EEs as non-problematic 69% of the time. The settings most likely to be selected when EEs were contested were the governor's office (58% contested) and outside of the prison (63% contested).

*Speakers:* When selecting speakers to serve as cultural authorities either in the form of direct quotes or paraphrased statements, journalists drew from a broad cast of characters, as described in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Speakers Evoked in the Discourse of Elected Executions

| Speakers | Description | Frequency | Problematic? Yes | Problematic? No |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Judge | Any judge relevant to decisions in the case including appeals court and the Supreme Court. | 21.4% (170) | 45% (77) | 55% (93) |

| Defense Attorney | Those directly associated with the case. States within the text that this individual is working as a defense attorney for the inmate. | 24.4% (194) | 46% (89) | (54%) (105) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Prosecutors | Those directly associated with prosecuting the case at any phase. | 27.0% (214) | 39% (84) | 61% (130) |
| Other Legal | Other attorneys and judges who are not responsible for the handling of the case in question or represent a party other than the inmate or the state who is directly involved in the case. | 28.5% (226) | 60% (131) | 42% (95) |
| Inmate | The inmate who is included in the sample. | 77.6% (616) | 43% (266) | 57% (350) |
| Inmate's Family | Any person who is intimately acquainted with the condemned. Includes childhood friends, parents, siblings, children, spouses, current friends, girlfriends/wives they met while in prison. | 15.5% (123) | 46% (57) | 54% (66) |
| Victim's Family | Any person who is intimately acquainted with the victim(s). Includes childhood friends, parents, siblings, spouses, children, and current friends. | 19.1% (152) | 42% (64) | 58% (88) |
| Law Enforcement | Any law enforcement agent, including marshals, sheriffs, police, including those who assisted in the arrest, transportation, or protection of the inmate. | 5.2% (41) | 63% (26) | 37% (15) |
| Dept. of Corrections | Any representative of a state or local correctional department, including wardens, prison spokespersons, guards, and parole boards. | 24.8% (197) | 47% (92) | 53% (105) |
| Mental Health Professional | Psychologists, social workers, and psychiatrists. | 11.8% (94) | 67% (63) | 33% (31) |
| Activists | Any group/individual who, out of personal/political/social conviction becomes involved in speaking about this particular inmate or their situation; | 23.4% (186) | 68% (127) | 32% (59) |

| Religious Figures | Any official of a church. Nuns, ministers, and reverends are included. Is not required to have had contact with the inmate. | 8.1% (64) | 70% (45) | 30% (19) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Media | Those working in news or entertainment media, other than the reporter who authored the article. | 2.8% (22) | 73% 16 | 27% 6 |
| Politicians | Includes everyone from the county commissioners to the President of the US. However, Governors are a special class of speakers. | 3.7% (29) | 52% (15) | 48% (14) |
| Governors | The governor of the state in which the execution is taking place. | 25.2% (200) | 65% (129) | 35% (71) |
| Other | Any other speaker not previously defined. | 0.6% (5) | 60% (3) | 40% (2) |

While no category of speaker appeared exclusively in either contested or uncontested articles, there were speakers who more commonly appeared when EEs were contested and vice versa. The characters who are evoked most commonly in articles that normalized EEs include prosecutors (61% normalized), victim's families (58% normalized), and the inmate (57% normalized). In comparison, those speakers who appear in more articles where elected executions are contested include religious figures (70% contested), activists (68% contested), mental health professionals (67% contested), governors (65% contested), and law enforcement (63% contested).

### The Drama of Elected Executions: A Play in Three Acts

We found that journalists had a consistent way of narrativizing EEs which revolved around six locations or scenes. Each scene mobilized a different cast of characters who were selected by journalists to comment on the issue. In this way, journalists were able to present the specific events of the case and discuss the broader phenomenon of EEs. In this section, we identify the scenes in the drama of EEs. We highlight that certain locations and speakers are more (or less) likely to be evoked when EEs are described as problematic (or non-problematic). When viewed dramaturgically, speakers and scenes combine to evoke a theater depicting specific settings where prescribed characters appear on cue.

Act I, Scene 1, The Scene of the Crime: When an article is set at the scene of the crime, EEs are overwhelmingly normalized or treated as non-problematic.Only 31% of all the articles set at the scene of the crime contest EEs (see Table 3). As indicated in Table 5, the inmate is the dominant character in this setting regardless of whether the overall frame was one of contestation or non-contestation.

**Table 5.** Scene I, Act 1, Scene of the Crime

| Speakers at the Scene of the Crime | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Contesting EEs | | Not Contesting EEs | |
| Inmate | 90% (19) | Inmate | 89% (42) |
| Dept. of Corrections | 76% (16) | Prosecutors | 34% (16) |
| Defense/Other Legal | 38% (8) | Dept. of Corrections/Defense | 28% (13) |

This is perhaps not surprising given the inmate's role as primary antagonist throughout (most of) the EE process and the protagonist's (victim's) necessary absence from the stage. The speakers who enter into this setting differ by whether or not they serve to legitimize the inmate's decision to hasten execution. Spokespersons from the Department of Corrections and attorneys fighting the execution are present in articles that contest the elected execution, while prosecutors and defense attorneys, along with the inmate, are present when articles normalize the inmate's decision to halt appeals. For example, an inmate in Florida told the judge that he wished for his "execution to come swift and unhampered" (Inmate Glen Ocha quoted in "Woman's killer scheduled for execution Tuesday: Wants no appeals," Associated Press, April 4, 2005). When an inmate initiates the process of ending his or her appeals after the sentence of death has been handed down, all other actors who participate in this pre-incarceration phase are presented as beginning their own process of acquiescing to the inmate's decision. One inmate's attorney told the AP that he believed his client looked at his execution "as peace" (Attorney Pat McCann quoted in "Killer executed in death of prostitute," Associated Press, June 7, 2005).

**Act I, Scene 2, The Courtroom:** The second scene plays out in the courtroom, where an inmate's decision to halt appeals is moderately contested (54% of articles problematize EEs). Typically the courtroom setting encompasses the appeals process and the competency hearing if one was requested, and a number of characters appear as indicated in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Scene I, Act 2, Courtroom

| Speakers in the Courtroom | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Contesting EEs | | Not Contesting EEs | |
| Inmate | 86% (118) | Inmate | 91% (106) |
| Other Legal | 48% (66) | Judge | 43% (60) |
| Judge | 43% (60) | Defense | 33% (39) |

At this phase in the judicial proceedings, the inmate is presented as staunchly opposed to anyone fighting his or her choice to halt appeals and only appears in the problematic courtroom articles because he or she factors so prominently into this setting. Other legal personnel appear because they are attorneys who no longer act on the inmate's bequest but in the interest of the family or on their own convictions. For example, an attorney from Arizona (representing a Texas inmate) told the reporter that "when you have an inmate who wants to commit state assisted suicide, it makes [a defense] all the more difficult. There is a presumption that the individual is able to make a competent decision. It is very tough to overcome" (Attorney Natman Schaye, lawyer and co-chairman of the death penalty committee of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, quoted in "Johnson reiterates he won't stop Clark execution," Associated Press, October 31, 2002).

In this scene, judges are called upon to make a ruling about the inmate's decision and they are typically presented as even-handed professionals whose response to EEs is based on adherence to judicial precedent. One judge told defense attorneys "evidence showing that an inmate's decision is the product of a mental disease does not show that he lacks the capacity to make a rational choice" (Judge Pamela Rymer quoted in "Appeals court says Nevada inmate can drop appeals, be executed," Associated Press, July 30, 2004). Further, the Florida Supreme Court wrote in a decision in 2002 that "these cases are about the right of SELF-DETERMINATION and FREEDOM to make fundamental choices affecting one's life"(Florida Supreme Court, "Court: Death row inmate has right to choose death," Associated Press, April 3, 2002; emphasis in original). The numbers of articles that contest or do not contest EEs in which a judge plays a role are equal. In those courtroom settings where EEs are not contested, most of the actors normalize the decision through arguments about the rights of inmates, the outcome of their contested competence hearing, or the ongoing danger they pose to society. To illustrate, a prosecutor in Texas was quoted as saying, "this inmate is a horrible danger to society and he will remain so. He's a sociopath, an absolute sociopath, but sane" (Prosecutor Susan Reed, "Judge refuses to allow hearing for convict who wants to die," Associated Press, March 9, 1985).

While not dominant in this setting, mental health professionals add legitimacy to the arguments on both sides of the legal debate over EEs. One psychiatrist in Nevada told the court that the inmate "does have the capacity to

appreciate his position and make a rational choice" (Nevada Supreme Court quoting a psychiatrist's report, "Nevada court lets condemned man withdraw appeal," Associated Press, March 12, 2004). The same reference to mental competence can be used to contest elected executions. A psychologist told a New Mexico judge that the inmate's "current conditions of confinement have so beaten him down that he doesn't want to live anymore" (Brian Pori quoting a psychiatrist's report, "Prosecution, defense, dispute death row inmate's alleged brain damage," Associated Press, April 30, 2001). When defense attorneys appear they act as one adhering to the wishes of their client(s). A defense attorney in Florida was quoted as saying her client "was very coherent. He was cogent. He instructed me not to interfere with his execution" (Attorney Baya Harrison quoted in "Gov. Bush lifts stay for condemned man, execution set Wednesday," Associated Press, October 1, 2002).

**Act II, Scene 1, The Prison:** Much like the courtroom setting described above, the language presented in the prison setting is somewhat ambivalent with regard to EEs – 53% of articles present the phenomenon as routine or non-problematic while 47% contest it. The dominant figure, the inmate, acts to both contest and normalize the decision to elect execution (see Table 7).

**Table 7.** Scene II, Act 1, Prison

| Speakers in the Prison | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Contesting EEs | | Not Contesting EEs | |
| Inmate | 84% (27) | Inmate | 94% (34) |
| Dept. of Corrections | 50% (16) | Prosecutor | 44% (16) |
| Governor | 30% (11) | Defense & Dept. of Corrections | 36% 139) |

An inmate in Nevada told the AP that "he did not believe he had anything to win so he would just be prolonging this and in the end he would still have to do it" (Reporter quoting inmate Jesse Bishop, "Domestic news," Associated Press, October 17, 1979). Prosecutors tend to cooperate with inmates when the event is normalized. For example, one prosecutor stated that many volunteers choose this mode of execution because "they feel it will make the victim's family feel better because they put the family through hell and they understand that now" (District Attorney Shirley quoted in "Dying drug addict allowing executions to move forward," September 21, 1999). An inmate echoed this belief when he reported that he "is the type of individual to face up to his responsibility and his mistakes" (Inmate James Porter quoted in "U.S. killer who sought death penalty awaits execution," January 3, 2005).

**Act II, Scene 2, The Governor's Office:** Articles set in the governor's office comprise the second largest proportion of articles that contest EEs. In fact, this is the setting where those actors who have a moral, political or social argument against EEs make their entrance, as detailed in Table 8.

**Table 8.** Scene II, Act 2, Governor's Office

| Speakers in the Governor's Office | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Contesting EEs | | Not Contesting EEs | |
| Governor | 87% (27) | Governor | 86% (19) |
| Activists | 61% (19) | Inmate | 55% (12) |
| Other Legal | 58% (18) | Activists | 36% (8) |

Oftentimes, these actors have had no personal association with the inmate, and their contestations of EEs are based on impersonal (ideological) arguments rather the idiosyncratic arguments that typify the courtroom setting. One activist expressed his concerns for the social ramifications of allowing inmates to elect their executions, stating that "if this first volunteer in Ohio was put to death, other executions would follow. The first domino is key" (Professor Christo Lassiter quoted in "Minister says Berry ready to die," Associated Press, March 4, 2005). When

EEs are normalized in the governor's office setting, actors frequently evoke the victim's family in order to justify the event, recounting the horrific nature of the crime(s) committed and the outcome of competence hearings. For example, the Governor of Florida told the AP that the "crime was very heinous…after a thorough and thoughtful process, this is the end of it" (Jacob DiPietre, spokesman for Governor Jeb Bush quoted in "Gov. Bush signs death warrant for Osceola county killer," Associated Press, March 4, 2005). Referring to another execution, Governor Bush explained that he has a "duty to have sympathy for the victims" (Governor Jeb Bush quoted in "Florida inmate who dropped appeals executed for 1999 slaying," Associated Press, April 5, 2005). In this particular setting, the inmate is typically presented as almost pleading with the governor to leave well enough alone and allow the execution to continue. For example, one inmate told the press that she was tired of the governor using her execution as fodder for his reelection campaign and to just sign the death warrant (Inmate Aileen Wuornos, "Florida Gov. Bush orders one of first known U.S. female serial killers executed next month," Associated Press, September 3, 2002).

**Act III, Scene 1, The Death Chamber:** Articles where the death chamber is the setting are the largest proportion of articles (66%) in which EEs are normalized. At this phase in the drama, all the cards seem to be in the inmate's hands. All other actors will respond only to cues from him or her, as detailed in Table 9.

**Table 9.** Scene III, Act 1, Death Chamber

| Speakers in the Death Chamber | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Contesting EEs | | Not Contesting EEs | |
| Inmate | 97% (62) | Inmate | 91% (129) |
| Dept. of Corrections | 48% (31) | Dept. of Corrections | 55% (68) |
| Governor | 47% (30) | Prosecutors and Victim's Family | 29% (41) |

A department of Corrections representative reported that if the inmate gave the word, attorneys were standing by to file necessary papers to stop the execution, but that the inmate had not called upon them to do so (State Prison Director Charles Wolff Jr. quoted in "Domestic news," Associated Press, October 20, 1979). The victim's family, along with prosecutors, enters the stage to make the case that this execution is for the best and now the victims can find peace. For example, one victim's mother in New Mexico told the AP that after 15 years of being at trials and court hearings, she was not going to miss the day to see justice for her daughter (Colleen Gore quoted in "Dena Lynn's father doesn't believe Clark will be executed," Associated Press, July 31, 2001).

**Act III, Scene 2, Outside the Prison:** The final scene occurs in the space directly outside of the prison on the days leading up to the execution or on the day itself. This setting figures most strongly among those articles contesting EEs, as described in Table 10.

**Table 10.** Scene III, Act 2, Outside the Prison

| Speakers Outside the Prison | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Contesting EEs | | Not Contesting EEs | |
| Activists | 100% (12) | Activists | 71% (5) |
| Religious Figures | 83% (10) | Inmate | 57% (4) |
| Inmate | 58% (7) | Religious Figures and Prosecutors | 43% (3) |

Like the governor's office, this setting is populated by actors who have moral or political concerns about EEs or with capital punishment in general, and who speak against the broad social effects of these events. Frequently, such a statement involves a criticism of the US criminal justice system. The former governor of New Mexico told the crowd outside of the prison that this execution "is not about one man at all. This is a battle for the heart and soul of New Mexico" (Former New Mexico Governor Toney Anaya quoted in "Death penalty opponents, supporters hold vigils

as Clark dies," Associated Press, November 6, 2001). Those actors appearing in articles where EEs are normalized in this setting are mobilized to support the inmate's choice or support the victims of violent crime. One protester told the reporter that she was here to "support the family. It has nothing to do with the death penalty" (Activist Pam McCoy quoted in "Protesters gather to decry Nevada execution," Associated Press, April 27, 2006).

## Discussion

To emphasize, our study examines speakers' presence in journalistic settings that normalize or contest EEs. Our data does not systematically capture speakers' precise arguments for or against EEs. We know each scene and which characters populate each scene, but not always whether those characters oppose or support EEs. Returning to Benford and Hunt's (1992) discussion of the conception of power in the dramaturgy of social movements, and Carragee and Roefs' (2004) discussion of power in framing research, what can we infer from our study about larger cultural authority over chosen executions? In terms of sheer quantity of time on-stage, the dominance of the inmate throughout this drama is perhaps no surprise, for as Haines points out, "The script of the ideal execution naturally contains a role for the person being put to death" (1992: 129; see also Conquergood 2002: 362). The dramaturgical dominance of the inmate would seem to grant him or her cultural (discursive) authority over his or her own fate, thus supporting the larger volunteering/choice frame of EEs that is sponsored by the pro-capital punishment community in the US (Harrington, 2000, 2004; Muschert et al. 2009). But the ambiguity of the inmate's role, on-stage nearly as often in scenes that contest EEs as in those that normalize them, muddies the claim. So too does the fact that inmates are less likely to be on-stage in two of the most overtly "political" settings in this drama – the governor's office, where final decisions about pardons or clemency might occur, and outside the prison, where pro- and anti-capital punishment activists gather to express their political and moral beliefs. Inmates are rarely mobilized, in other words, in settings where larger macro-level discussions about the politics, law, and ethics of EEs might reasonably occur. Their presence in this drama is to represent the level of the personal, the individual (see below).

Consider, as well, the relatively minimal presence of defense attorneys in this dramatic performance, the near-complete absence of the audience (general public), and the key settings chosen by journalists when EEs are both normalized and contested. Defense attorneys appear in three of the six scenes (scene of the crime, courtroom, and prison) and are the least active character (or least dominant speaker) on-stage in each scene; moreover, two of their three scenes (courtroom and prison) serve to normalize rather than contest the inmate's chosen action. Given that defense attorneys are formally charged with protecting their client's best interests, and in EEs are placed in the odd position of deciding whether death by execution serves those interests, one might expect attorneys to have a more prominent role in the cast. This is especially true for the approximately 200-member group of anti-death penalty cause lawyers in the US who specialize in representing death row inmates in post-conviction appeals and who have unusually close relationships with their clients (Harrington 2000; Sarat 1998). How can we make sense of their minimal role? Since attorneys' professional guidelines do not lay out their formal duties in the context of EEs (Harrington 2000), their behavior is perhaps less predictable – that is, from a journalist's perspective is less predictably tied to a particular scene or setting – than that of other characters such as state governors, law enforcement officials and/or death penalty activists. However, we also might question whether defense attorneys' lack of on-stage presence and their evocation in scenes that normalize EEs may help reassure spectators (readers) that the subsequent execution is appropriate (or in Haines' [1992] terminology, "clean"). Rather than a co-starring role in which s/he actively thwarts his or her client's wishes, defense counsel is presented as offering implicit support by fading into the background. As one defense attorney described, in cases of EEs "[e]verybody is doing the 'right' thing together" – including the inmate – and this "may give the public a certain sense of absolution for the death penalty itself" (quoted in Harrington 2004: 1133). The absence of defense counsel in this particular drama thus provides further support for the argument that the US news media helps normalize EEs (and thus legitimize capital punishment) through its framing practices (Muschert et al. 2009).

We also note the virtual absence of the general public (aside from family members of both inmate and victim) in the dramaturgy of EEs. Foucault (1977) argued that in open (publicized) executions the main character is the audience – the general public has to know an execution has taken place for it to be effective. Miller and Hunt agree, stating "the audience is still the most important character in the current system of punishment and [. . .] executions are still spectacles. The news media has replaced the scaffold and the crowd of observers is larger than ever, just

hidden from view" (2008: 190). In that light, the absence of the audience in reportage of EEs is somewhat baffling – the dramatic point is incomplete or obscured – because unlike with routine (non-consensual) executions, we have no way to infer how the audience reacts to the drama of EEs. While there are frequent national polls assessing public support of the death penalty, thus allowing press reports of most executions to be read in the context of broader "known" patterns of audience response, there have been no empirical studies to date of laypersons' understanding of executions that are chosen. While our prior study (Muschert et al. 2009) speculated about how news framing of EEs might impact public opinion, there is no systematic data that sheds light on this issue. In this particular drama, then, journalists' inclusion of the audience-as-speaker could offer a more comprehensive portrait of the phenomenon of EEs than is currently available (even though speaker quotes would still be selected by journalists, etc.).

Finally, consider the setting/speaker combinations that dominate when EEs are normalized versus when they are contested. In short, news stories set at the scene of the crime and the death chamber are most likely to normalize EEs and tend to be populated by figures most intimately familiar with the crime and its consequences at the individual- or micro-level (e.g. inmate, victim's family). In contrast, settings in which EEs tend to be contested (Governor's office, outside the prison) are populated with a wider range of characters less intimately connected with the inmate and victim(s), who are instead discursively associated with more macro-level political and/or ideological perspectives on capital punishment (e.g. gubernatorial staff, activists, religious spokespersons). Earlier we summarized literature pointing to a range of political influences, both formal and informal, that influence the death penalty and shape the roles played by all participants in the process (Bonnie 1990; Harrington 2004). We find it interesting that journalistic practices appear to articulate and/or highlight political aspects when contesting EEs (through quoting a Governor or self-defined activist, for example) while normalizing EEs through de-politicizing strategies (through focusing on a family's sense of closure or an inmate's last words, for example). In the context of socio-legal debates about EEs, this provides support for scholars who argue that EEs are an "intimate" decision best left to the inmate (e.g. K. L. Johnson 1981), as well as for those who reject EEs due to the legal, legislative, and administrative challenges it presents (e.g. Dieter 1990). Journalistic practices, then, correspond with scholarly debates about EEs.

## Conclusion

Writing in a very different context, anthropologist Davis-Floyd (1997) documents the ritualistic practices that transformed childbirth during the 20th century in the US, shifting it from a "natural" process into one thoroughly mediated and moderated by science, technology, and medical professionals. As cultural authority over the birthing process was wrested from the woman giving birth to the techno-medical establishment, (female-dominated) reproduction was transformed into (male-dominated) production. The dramaturgical analysis undertaken here suggests a more ambiguous transformation, less absolute though arguably as dramatic. As we noted earlier, the socio-legal discourse that surrounds EEs uses a dominant discourse of volunteering to refer to inmates' desire to hasten appeals, a terminology which seems to transform the antagonist of this drama – the criminal sentenced to death – into a protagonist instead, nobly accepting his or her punishment. Our own prior study offered support for this perspective, as US print journalists' adoption of a dominant choice frame upheld the notion of the inmate as agentic participant in the execution process (Muschert et al. 2009). Our more nuanced analysis of journalistic practices undertaken here, however, suggests a more indefinite positioning of the inmate – still the lead character but one whose motives and agency are unclear and whose staunchest ally (defense counsel) plays but a minor role.

Moreover, the overall journalistic stance on EEs remains uncertain. The scenes taking place at the scene of the crime and the death chamber offer the same level of strong support for the non-problematic nature of EEs (69% unproblematic, 31% problematic), with scenes taking place in the courtroom, prison, and governor's office offering indefinite readings on the phenomenon. Were the play to end after scene 5, the weight of the argument would suggest that inmates' decisions to waive appeals are laudable and should be respected (i.e. the pro-capital punishment position). But the final scene outside the courtroom throws a twist, with only 31% of articles taking a non-problematic stance on EEs. Greer writes, "Like crime narratives more generally, execution narratives are structured and inflected in various ways that encourage 'seeing' through the eyes of the state and [. . .] through the eyes of victims or their loved ones" (2006: 97). Similarly, Miller and Hunt (2008) conclude their dramaturgical analysis of non-consensual execution news stories by explaining that the "construction of the majority of execution stories implies that the death sentence is a proper closure to a string of criminal and legal events" (p. 208). It perhaps

requires an expert in theatre to know best how to interpret surprise endings and their likely impact on audience members. Suffice it to say that the journalistic construction of cultural authority over EEs is indefinite – and given the link between particular frames and master frames (Van Gorp 2007), our findings seem to speak to growing ambiguity about capital punishment in the US.

## Endnotes

1: Questions of voluntariness and competence are relevant since the US constitution prevents the execution of the mentally incompetent (Ford v. Wainwright, 1986), and since many question whether a "rational" person would ever elect his or her own death. For example, in a recent study Blume (2005) documents linkages between EEs and schizophrenia, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and suicidal ideation and/or attempts. For a discussion of EEs, mental competence, and end-of-life decision-making see Harrington (2004).

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# The Hyperbole of Dubai

**Josh Hammerling**

I twisted my palms into my arid eyes, a consolation for the sleep I'd never get. The cabin lights had been turned off for over ten hours, but I remained awake, daydreaming of slumber. The classmate to my left had been lulled into a fairytale-sleep by the drone of the plane's engine coupled with Tylenol PM. He drooled blissfully as I sat hunched with a travel guidebook, pouring over the statistics and fantastical descriptions of Dubai under a solitary bulb spotlighting me from above. There were sections that described the city as "a Disneyland in the desert," and others that insisted, "you haven't seen industry until you've seen Dubai; it's capitalism on steroids!" And, "This city is a testament to the fact that with enough money and governmental gusto, any architectural feat can be achieved." I had read many such descriptions of Dubai while preparing for a Peace Journalism course that took place that January in 2008. Yet, I remained uncertain as to what exactly to expect.

I leaned back into the stale Lilliputian pillow I was given before take off as images of King Ludwig's Neuschwanstein formed upon the rolling desert dunes of the Arabian Peninsula, cartoon fireworks searing the sapphire sky. Dubai's ruler, Sheik Mohammed, standing there on the man-made palm islands in the foreground of my mental mirage, sweeping his hand out toward the dreamscape and welcoming me to his prosperous metropolis. Just over his shoulder lay the famous Ski Dubai, one of the world's few indoor ski resorts, fused directly to the famous Mall of the Emirates: a sprawling mass of designer shops connected by a glossy pearl floor and enough gold plating to make King Midas weep. Its halls packed with men in intricately woven dishdashas and shimaghs that billow gracefully alongside their wives in jewel-studded burqas—a tangible manifestation of the East-to-West culture clash. I tried to imagine what their faces would look like, but because Dubai has a population of over 80% expat workers and less than 20% Emirati citizens, I couldn't fathom a typical face.

The mirage gradually dissolved as I opened my eyes, turning lethargically toward the open window. City lights crested the horizon.

## What Does Dubai Represent?

Even now, three years after my trip to Dubai, it is difficult to make sense of the experience. The Emirati city underwent a full-scale transformation on fast-forward over the past 40 years, accomplishing in a few decades what most nations would have struggled to plan in the same amount of time. Dubai now exhibits such extremes concerning its architecture and general socio-economic structure that many writers have found it appropriate to comment on the city in an equally hyperbolic manner; an over-the-top story warrants over-the-top coverage. Those who employ hyperbole attempt to answer the questions of what Dubai signifies for the rest of the world and how we should make sense of its extraordinary expansion, which transformed the city from an undeveloped outpost on rolling dunes into a bustling mega-metropolis. The conclusions of Dubai's critics ultimately reveal their own motives; it is as if Dubai were some desert mirage, in which these writers sought to find their own reflections. Their conclusions can be seen as four responses to the question, What does Dubai represent?

- Dubai is an artificial cultural simulation, comparable to Disneyland or Las Vegas.
- Dubai represents a new progressivism in East-West relations, taking a step away from the extremism prevalent in the

Gulf region.
- Dubai is an economic catastrophe, made visible by the economic downturn of 2009.
- Dubai is a symbol of exploitation, reducing construction workers to Bare Life, who are unable to do more than just survive.

## Dubai as Sign of Cultural Simulation

Dubai has engendered many metaphor-laden comments as to the nature of its standing as a simulation of myriad cultural images and monuments from around the world. This critique is primarily informed by the postmodern philosophy of Guy Debord and Jean Baudrillard. Debord, a 20th century French theorist, claims that the genuine experience of life has been replaced: "In societies dominated by modern conditions of production, life is presented as an immense accumulation of spectacles. Everything that was directly lived has receded into a representation" (7). Applying this to Dubai, one sees that the cultural aspects simulated in the city are copies of originals deprived of their contextual significance. All one encounters in Dubai is an accumulation of artificial representations.

Baudrillard, a French philosopher and contemporary of Debord, refers to Disneyland as the prototypical model of a simulated society that sustains no meaningful connection to the Real. Baudrillard comments on the implications of such simulation: "It is no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody. It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real, that is to say of an operation of deterring every real process via its operational double" (Simulacra 2). Baudrillard calls this operational double simulacrum, or an artificial semblance or representation that refers to something else. The problem within our society, Baudrillard argues, is that an endless string of simulacra have emerged, the referent of which cannot be found. The copy has replaced the original.

In 2003, Jack Lyne claimed that a Disneyland had been built in the desert. He was referring to the recent construction project, "Dubailand," a five billion-dollar development that began in the early days of the Dubai boom; however, Baudrillardian explanations of Dubai as Disneyland have been employed numerous times over the years. Jana Shearer questions the values of a society that would construct a shopping complex by appropriating images of the many countries visited by Ibn Battuta in the 14th century to displace the need to actually visit those places. She writes, "According to locals you would never need to step on another airplane after visiting this complex, as even the smells of each land have been simulated." Shearer highlights the fact that Dubai seems to have combined the Western world's economic model with the cultural experience of the Orient as a whole. This can be seen as the postmodern appropriation of the exotic, oriental other in the westernized form of pure simulacrum—what Baudrillard refers to as the precession of the Simulacra. In Dubai, idealized simulacra of other societies' cultures have been combined to constitute a new sort of culture that lacks a significant history.

Christian Steiner argues, in a manner similar to Shearer, that Dubai has become something of a commodified version of the hyperreal Orient, "the undisputed epicentre of an iconographic destination devolopment." Travel destinations such as Dubai, Qatar, and Oman have appropriated cultural features that have no spatial, historical, or social embededness within their own society. He is effectively saying that when a young nation attempts to appropriate everything from other societies, a hyperreal simulation is the inevitable outcome. This criticism recalls Baudrillard's ruminations on the forthcoming simulation-based societies in his book, America: "In the future, power will belong to those peoples with no origins and no authenticity who know how to exploit that situation to the full" (Baudrillard 76). Indeed, Dubai has a number of cultural traditions that have been passed down over the years—including falconry and sailing—but it remains to be seen whether megaplex shopping malls and the cult of the celebrity will overshadow them. Visiting the famous Burj Al-Arab hotel convinced me that such an overshadowing may already have taken place.

## The Burj Al-Arab

During our second week in Dubai, Peyman Pejman, a short and lively journalist friend of my Peace Journalism professor's organized a last-minute tour of the Burj Al-Arab. He called the bus that had taken us from the airport to the hotel the night before and we made our way to Jumeirah Beach. Peyman's eyes widened as he spoke of the new superstructure being built that, upon completion, would be even bigger than Taipei's 1,670ft financial center

skyscraper. Peyman mentioned there was even an underwater hotel in the works. I was beginning to get the feeling that literally everything in Dubai is either the biggest of its kind, the first of its kind, or simply the most extravagant of its kind. It's no wonder so many architects see the booming city as the quintessential space to live out their wildest fantasies of structural design.

As we made our way to Jumeirah, the city layout became clearer. Before our arrival, I was under the impression that Dubai was a tight cluster, a large group of awe-inspiring skyscrapers crowded together. The reality is a wider spread; however, western tourists and business people tend to stay closer to Jumeirah, which was a relatively short bus ride to the Southwest from our hotel.

Once we arrived at Jumeirah Beach, the drive out to the Burj Al-Arab only exacerbated the excitement: there was an elongated bridge extending directly to the lobby of the hotel that dropped off to water on both sides. A small group of bellhops stood perched on the curb, hands clasped behind their backs, leaving their spots occasionally to run to and from arriving cars. They accomplished this with a sense of urgency fitting for the world's only 7-star hotel (self-proclaimed). They eyed us as we rolled up to the entrance, but their glances quickly moved to the next car when they saw our cameras and notepads.

As I walked into the lobby, a concierge standing in an enormous, golden seashell greeted me. "Welcome to the Burj Al-Arab, how may I help you?" Peyman took over at this point and we were set free in the atrium of that enormous structure. I nearly wrenched my neck gazing up at the 180-meter ceiling and the individual floors stacked carefully like so many layers of decadent wedding cake. The azure walls and amber-studded railings folded under one another and arched into the triangular hollow of what can only be described as an enormous sail. A modern-day ark dreamt up and constructed as a protective vessel to keep the royal family of Dubai afloat, above any potential loss in the area of oil production. Contemplating the elaborate edifice as a whole, it is evident they were banking on tourism to replace oil as the primary means of income for the city; this building was a testament to that fact. But at what cost? Marcus Westbury explores this question in his article, "Real cultural fusion cannot be bought."

Westbury sees Abu Dhabi and Dubai as a potential "melting pot of cultures and characters," but remarks that the two remain separated, a "generation or two short" of achieving palpable cultural fusion. The cities lack the imagination in their operation; their actions are grounded in the belief that there will "always be plenty of money," and that all things can be bought complete and fully formed. Westbury, as with Steiner and Shearer, sees Dubai as a culture-deprived society attempting to copy the structures and forms of other nations to make up for that lack. Stephen Zacks challenged these critiques in 2007, when he claimed that there is more to Dubai than meets the eye.

## Dubai as a Sign of "Progressiveness"

Zacks urges the public to look "Beyond the Spectacle" as he outlines the "progressive" nature of Dubai. He insists the public is so hung up on the glossy, superlative cliché of Dubai that they have overlooked the liberal nature of the city, which "will one day replace New York as the economic and cultural capital of the world." Sheikh Mohammed commented on the implications of the city's development: "Progress provides power to politics. Without power, politics is a wretched business." Both Zacks and Sheikh Mohammed seem to be defining progressive as anything associated with new, contemporary ideas and governmental systems promoting the radical transformation of the cityscape; the connotations of increased protection of civil liberties and positive social reform, ideas usually tied to the word "progressive," are missing from their definitions. Zacks furthers his definition of Dubai as progressive by adding that it is a

> rare example of social and economic diversity in the Arab world where the East is meeting the West on less fraught terms than the exchange of cash for barrels of oil—and where, in a region plagued by dictatorship and bad governance, the state as entrepreneur is being held to international standards by global consumers.

Dubai is thus progressive in that it has waged a "war of development," as opposed to a war on neighboring nations or jihad against the West (Maktoum). Dubai may not be at war, but the city's development has nevertheless brought about negative effects, and this raises questions about the implications of Dubai's progressiveness. I cannot help but wonder whether or not it is possible to successfully combine capitalism with Shariah Law. I met with Dr. Brenda Ihssen, a Visiting Assistant Professor of Religious History and Historical Theology at Pacific Lutheran University, to see if she had an answer to my question. I thought it would be beneficial to talk with her about whether

or not Dubai had strayed from the core values of Islam in favor of becoming a capitalism-powered entertainment oasis.

I sat down in Dr. Ihssen's office earlier this fall—nestled between overflowing cabinets and shelves that bowed downward from the weight of countless books on Middle-Eastern history and Islamic poetry—as she made room for my recorder among paintings and collections of Rumi that were spread across her desk. She smirked as she said, "You know, I don't do modernity; my area's Early Medieval." I assured her that her comments would still be useful. One of the most recognizable features of Dr. Ihssen is her general enthusiasm for any subject you ask her about; however, her happy-go-lucky manner was offset by an earnest, critical assessment of my questions. In response to my question of whether or not the core values of Islam can coexist with the unbridled capitalism of Dubai, she said:

> A capitalist culture is as successful as the amount that it can produce and the amount that it can make. A capitalist culture doesn't care about the human cost. Both the Christian and Islamic systems value the human, which doesn't mean that they're incompatible to Capitalism, but I question to what degree Capitalism can reach it's fullest expression if you have either of those religious systems in place. If Capitalism succeeds and religion doesn't, you will have a devaluing of the person.

It is not my place to judge whether or not Dubai truly embraces the values of Islam and Shariah Law; however, the way they currently operate nevertheless sheds light on how they seem to understand the principles of Shariah Law. As Dr. Ihssen explained that day in her office, an Islamic society operating according to Shariah Law "should benefit the Ummah, the community. If not, then it's violating the law." One could argue that Dubai has indeed benefitted the community in the sense that enormous sums of money have been made, assuming that wealth trickles down to the expatriates there; however, that is most often not the case.

The situation in Dubai strangely mirrors the period of social upheaval the prophet Muhammad responded to in the seventh century. The established desert values of generosity, gift-giving, and equitable distribution of goods at this time were supposed to sustain the well being of all people. As Dr. Ihssen explained,

> You don't want one family to have all the money and leave the rest behind, floundering in the wake… The earliest Quranic verses reveal that the Prophet Muhammad's concerned with the widows, he's concerned with women who have been abandoned, with orphans, with the mentally ill, with all people on the margins.

She went on to add that in the seventh century it became all the more important to highlight these principles, as one family had gained control of almost all the wealth; this is what the Prophet Muhammad sought to change. Presently, in Dubai, the Royal Family has a majority of the wealth, and it is the construction workers who have been left behind. It would thus be difficult to argue that Dubai's progressiveness refers to anything outside of its architectural and financial success, a success that is contingent upon socio-political divisions and a general disregard for the humanity of the construction workers who are building the city. This issue was heavily highlighted in 2009, as Dubai was held under the searing magnifying glass of journalists speculating about the city's future. The economic downturn elicited new reactions to the city in the desert, which have since permeated the Internet.

## Dubai as Sign of Economic Catastrophe: Enter Dubai-Bashing Articles

Johann Hari leveled a prototypical critique of this kind in his article, "The Dark Side of Dubai." Hari insists Dubai looks less "like Manhattan in the sun than Iceland in the desert… the very earth is trying to repel Dubai, to dry it up and blow it away." He charges that the city was built "from nothing in just a few wild decades on credit and ecocide, suppression and slavery," going on to conclude, "Dubai is a living metal metaphor for the neo-liberal globalised world that may be crashing – at last – into history." Sheikh Mohammed responded to this criticism by saying, "We don't deny that the financial crisis put us in a state of silence. We don't refute that an information vacuum followed. We are fully aware that this created a fertile environment for rumors to thrive. I say now that we must not allow this to happen again in the future" (Maktoum Quote Section). Sheikh Mohammed may be prepared to engage in a PR offensive, but just as Hari might have provided more evidence, neither is it fair to dismiss his critique as a thriving rumor.

Hari's analysis is an example of the hyperbolic rhetoric employed to illustrate the incommunicable exaggeration of Dubai. It reinforces the critique of Dubai as an ultra-capitalistic city bound for destruction. He is convinced that Dubai will not recover from the economic downturn, and he employs this assertion as proof of the impending

failure of Capitalism as such; Dubai has thus come to serve as a sign of the inevitable failure of the capitalist system. Hari was not the only one to level such a critique. Western reporters wrote hundreds of articles employing similarly ominous tones.

Simon Jenkins, in an article for The Guardian, reduced Dubai to "iconic overkill, a festival of egotism with humanity denied. An architectural chorus line of towers, each shouting louder and kicking higher… the dunes will reclaim the place." In a similar tone, a reporter from The Independent referred to the city as "[an] awful lot of wreckage after an orgy of hedonistic excess" (AP). It may look like a modern country, notes Caroline Cadwalladr, "but it takes more than a few skyscrapers to create one of those." Another called it "[a] tombstone for capitalist hubris and exuberance…" "Wall Street meets Las Vegas. Meets Xanadu. On crack" (Nobel). Mike Davis set aside a whole chapter of his book, "Evil Paradises," to the topic. He diagnoses Dubai as not merely a hybrid of cities such as Vegas, Manhattan, Orlando, Monaco, and Singapore, but rather "their collective summation and mythologization: a hallucinatory pastiche of the big, the bad, and the ugly" (51). Therein lies one of the potential weaknesses of the hyperbolic arguments.

Although Davis does an exceedingly detailed job of pointing out the controversial characteristics of Dubai, he excludes the "attacked" from the conversation, effectively killing any chance for dialogue before it begins. At one point, he refers to the Sheikh as an "enlightened despot," who has maintained ties with the Taliban and Al Qaeda (rumors we heard there as well, explanations as to why Dubai has yet to be attacked by terrorists) (51). The way Davis went about his critique leads the reader to believe it was perhaps neither his, nor the other hyperbole-minded journalists' intent to open up a dialogue with the people who have a direct and immediate influence in the city. Their purpose, rather, was to draw attention to the topic using hyperbole, as opposed to carefully diagnosing specific problems with measured, accurate language. Todd Reisz and Rory Hyde pointed out the shortcomings of such articles in their piece, "Abandoned Cars and Memories of a Bashing," by probing the particular flaws of one argument and shedding light on the general trend of Dubai-bashing articles as a whole.

## Defending Dubai Against Hyperbolic Articles

Reisz and Hyde primarily challenge the conclusions of N. Raghu Raman and Cory Doctorow, who claimed that climbing debt and increased lay-offs after the economic downturn had led expatriate workers to drop everything and leave Dubai as quickly as possible. Doctorow wrote that in a four-month period, at least 2,500 abandoned vehicles were found outside Terminal III of Al Maktoum International Airport. Local sources told Reisz and Hyde that in reality a mere dozen had been found. The earlier pieces had hoped to employ the image of the abandoned car as a symbol of Dubai's impending downfall. Reisz explains, "With the global economy in free fall, newspapers sought a tangible example of the effects of the financial crisis. Dubai, a city that seemed to best encapsulate the credit-fueled boom of the previous decade was the easiest target. It had London's or New York's avarice, but Dubai's was less laced with 'culture' and 'history.'" Reisz argues that the Dubai-bashing articles allowed the deficit-depressed western world to "bathe in smug schadenfreude and forget about its own troubles," to regain confidence in the face of our own financial crisis.

The problem with Reisz's analysis is it fails to address the legitimate concerns of the hyperbolic articles. After all, hyperbolic rhetoric is not meant to be taken literally, but employed to emphasize aspects of an assertion. In this case, the journalists were exaggerating the situation in Dubai to emphasize the government's unregulated spending concerning architecture and their gross violation of human rights. Claiming that such acts of journalism were merely schadenfreude does not efface the fact that construction workers are being treated inhumanely, or that the government's actions are contributing to the widening gap between the rich and poor that plagues East and West. In a recent article, "Making Dubai: A Process in Crisis," Reisz comments on the present conceptions of the city:

> No matter how many derisive labels one side of the world conjures up for Dubai, the city still stands for freedom, daresay hope, in a part of the world whose population (and growth rate) easily outstrips that of North America and the European Union. Dubai's greatest export and perhaps its last chance at survival lie in this image. And it is one that no PR agent could ever take credit for.

It is noble of Reisz to defend Dubai as an image of hope for the countless individuals struggling in North Africa and Southeast Asia, but what of the fact that these dreamers have been systematically oppressed upon arrival to

work in this half-built paradise? Commenting on the potential dangers of capitalist societies based on the American model of cultural appropriation, Baudrillard insists, "it is this culture which, the world over, fascinates those very people who suffer most at its hands, and it does so through the deep, insane conviction that it has made all their dreams come true" (Baudrillard 77). If this image-fueled reverie signals the need for a safe haven in such a turbulent region, why not advocate for some level of oversight and security on behalf of those working there? There are clearly systemic problems in Dubai that must be addressed before any substantial reforms can be put into place. That is exactly what Sharla Musabih, an Emirati national who lived in Dubai for 26 years, attempted to do; shortly thereafter, she was forced to leave the country because of the smear campaigns leveled against her.

In Series 6 of the Doha Debates from 2009, Musabih responded to the question of why she had been living in the USA for the past year:

> Because of my work defending victims of human rights violations as well as human trafficking, domestic violence, something that they don't want me to talk about, so when I speak out loud about victims of human trafficking, and when I speak out loud about the lack of a system for protection of these people, what do I get? I get accused of being a human trafficker in the media.

Musabih goes on to say that numerous workers pleaded with her to call attention to their dismal situation: "Please, you're speaking on behalf of the foreigners, can you be our voice?" The construction workers themselves have no voice in Dubai; their role in society is that of the silent worker bee. Their worth lies in their ability to work, often for 14 hours a day. A tangible example of the truly excessive construction in Dubai was visible from my hotel window on a daily basis during our time there.

## The Plight of the Construction Worker

After our first night in the city, I awoke to the grinding clank of iron on iron a few stories below the window of my hotel room. Kyle stood holding back the lace curtain, peering downward at a mass of uniformed workers shuffling around a construction site with the resolve of subservient drones, laying heaps of metal pipes and two-by-fours into prearranged patterns. A foreman held an over-sized blue scroll, inspecting the margins as his eyes darted back and forth between the page and the site. The workers scurried to wherever his stabbing finger gesticulated. Kyle shook his head and asked, "Did they ever stop working? I'm pretty sure I saw people down there last night." In the weeks that followed, it became something of a daily ritual to peer down at that bustling construction site that grew one story every couple of days, but the workers remained a mystery to us.

Try as you may to uncover the nitty-gritty of Dubai through talking to people on the street or to tour guides at resorts, the "official story" is generally all you will get. As if open, critical dialogue in the city would inevitably lead to your swift incarceration. I found out after returning from Dubai that the Royal Family actually has a zero-tolerance policy for dissention; protestors of any sort tend to be deported immediately. The laborers aren't even allowed to form unions. Peyman explained to me that various nations in the Gulf—Dubai included—do not allow labor unions because it is the government's duty to look after the well being of all workers. The fact of the matter is the Royal Family is not doing enough to protect their construction workers; the actions of the government have at times even contributed to the problematic treatment of the labor force in Dubai. This was clearly visible in the early days of the Dubai boom, around 2003, when The UAE Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs instigated a "cultural diversity policy," which contributed to an influx of non-Asian workers. The ultimate result of this screening was that Asian workers who were already there had problems renewing their visas. Many construction workers thus decided to simply stay illegally without papers, as the risk of jail time was preferable to going to their home countries and encountering upset family members who depend on them for sustenance (Janardhan).

Thousands of North Africans and Southeast Asians have come to the city chasing what Reisz refers to as a last remaining hope. Dubai is a safe haven for migrant workers hoping to escape dictatorships. Lauren Greenfield quoted an American expat working in Dubai as saying that although Dubai's promise may have faded in the economic downturn, "people who dream of a better life dream of coming to Dubai. You can call it the American dream." Dubai thus offers a sort of gulfanized version of the idea that all should have equal opportunity to work and succeed. It is as if Dubai were calling out across the Gulf and desert: Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, so that we can use them to build this fair city. Once the construction workers arrive in Dubai, their passports are confiscated for safekeeping to ensure they do not run away. Stripped of their basic humanity, these

workers enter a cycle of being bused back and forth between their barracks on the outskirts of the city and various construction sites. If they are injured on the job, they receive mediocre treatment and are frequently forced to pay for a ticket home. Some writers have claimed, however, that these conditions are changing. Piers Morgans' piece on Dubai seems to suggest that there have been improvements with regard to the construction workers' treatment since most of the Dubai-bashing articles were published.

## Improvement of Conditions for Construction Workers?

In his analysis of the labor plight, Morgan insists that Dubai is no longer the great unspoken evil it once was, nonetheless acknowledging that "Tens of thousands of workers, mainly from India, Pakistan and China, get paid less than £200 a month and live in camps that could best be described as very basic," and then adding that

> A significant number of them die or get seriously hurt during construction, too, though the exact numbers are kept secret by the authorities. But after the Western media exposed all this several years ago, Sheik Mohammed took action. There is now a hotline for any workers to call if they have complaints about their working or living conditions.

He goes on to say that, from what he could deduce, the complaints tend to be acted upon. Call me naive, but it may take more than the installation of a hotline in a few barracks to prevent the mistreatment of thousands of migrant workers. The bottom line is that present-day Dubai would not exist without the exploitation of this workforce. As discussed above, however, the possibilities for direct action to change the workers' conditions seem to be rather limited.

Aside from in the case of Musabih, often a conflict of interest prohibits those in Dubai from instigating an openly critical discussion about the city. Reisz, for example, is not a humanitarian, but an architect. His interests may therefore be equally as invested in the future financial success of Dubai as the next contractor. In any case, he has less interest in highlighting the labor problems in Dubai than organizations such as Human Rights Watch.

In 2003, Human Rights Watch (HRW) published an article and a few open letters to Jim Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, insisting the Bank "should be leading the way in international efforts to protect [foreign workers] from exploitation and abuse." HRW claim that the only real way to affect the situation in Dubai is to affect those organizations that give the country the means to continue its massive growth. If the World Bank were to grant money only to those companies that uphold humane standards for their workers, the problem would be solved. Nick Meo reported two years later that all of HRW's appeals went unaddressed by the UAE. It was not until 2009 that they would bring the issue back to light in an 80-page report, claiming that although minor improvements have been made with regard to the "timely payment of wages and labor conditions," the practice of withholding worker passports, imposing unfair fines, and charging unlawful recruitment fees is still taking place. HRW is using the same strategy they did before in 2003 by putting pressure on the construction companies active in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, as opposed to directly appealing to the government. The impact of the 2010 report remains to be seen. Cameron Sinclair adopted a similar angle as HRW in his article, "Dying to Work: Human Trafficking and the Construction Industry."

Sinclair points to the fact that the economic downturn has exacerbated the problems there, but that it is also a problem we have here, in the US. He refers to the Dubai workers as "boom and bust refugees." They were brought in for the boom a number of years ago, but as soon as the over $80 billion of overspending in Dubai became known, and affected the global economic downturn, the workers were forced to start heading home. However, they were often too far in debt from getting there in the first place to buy a ticket home. We have encountered this story many times, but Sinclair takes it one step further, inquiring as to whether or not the private companies going along with this treatment of the workers should also be held accountable. Sinclair calls for building professionals to use their unique positions to support groups like Build Safe UAE, which would influence stronger legislation and use the obligation of contracts to ensure humane standards for the workers.

## The Unlikelihood of Government-Instigated Change

There is little hope that Dubai as a whole will sign on to something like Build Safe UAE or the "International

Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families," because they are violating many of the articles laid out. Article 13 of the "International Convention" states that

> migrant workers and members of their families shall have the right to hold opinions without interference... shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art or through any other media of their choice.

Not only are they not allowed to speak out against their conditions, but the construction workers have no recourse if they are severely injured on the job. HRW reported that there have also been high rates of death and injury on the construction sites. Dubai is thus also in violation of Article 16 of the Convention, which states that migrant workers shall have "the right to protection by the State against violence, physical injury, threats, and intimidation, whether by public officials or by private individuals, groups or institutions." The list of violations goes on, however, there are also those who argue that the environment in the camps is simply not that bad, at the very least compared to the dictatorships in the surrounding countries.

Liz Ditz, a blogger who claims to have encountered the workers first hand, defends Sheikh Mohammed and the royal family. She claims that the construction workers are treated well in the camps, get three meals a day, and actually are paid 10 times more than in their home countries. Claiming the workers get paid more than they do at home may be an unsatisfactory defense of their conditions. As Sarah Whitson of HRW observed, "That's what exploitation is — you take advantage of someone's desperation" (Deparle). Ditz nevertheless insists it is more likely a result of smaller companies' failure to maintain proper conditions for the workers that things have gone so poorly; this could have happened without the royal family ever learning about it. Their ignorance thus absolves their responsibility to protect the workers: not their company, not their problem. I asked Dr. Ihssen about this. She responded by addressing the implications of such a governmental move by saying, "I don't think the government is ignorant, nor would I think the government would want to suggest it's ignorant. If any government said, 'Oh, we didn't know,' you'd have to question their legitimacy."

This argument for innocence through ignorance is further undercut by the fact that, as Peyman explained to me, nearly all of the money funnels back to the royal family, as a vast majority of the private business sector is subsidized by the government. Conducting a comprehensive study of the extent to which Dubai's government is responsible for the often-poor conditions of the camps would be nearly impossible; however, if the government continues to function as a private business, while claiming they are not responsible for the actions of the contractors they bring in from the USA and Europe, the problems will persist, the dreams of Dubai's labor force will continue to be exploited, and the general humanity of the construction workers will not be recognized.

The problem here lies in the distinction between human rights and the rights of a citizen, which Hannah Arendt first addressed in relation to the refugees of WWII. Must the rights of all members of humankind be addressed, or is it necessary to first attain the legal status of full citizen? In Dubai, the latter seems to be the case. Those denied citizenship and relegated to a position on the edge of society risk losing their humanity all together. Arendt addressed this dilemma in her work, On Totalitarianism. She comments on those individuals forced to live outside of the immediate public sphere:

> They lack that tremendous equalizing of differences which comes from being citizens of some commonwealth... The paradox involved in the loss of human rights is that such loss coincides with the instant when a person becomes a human being in general—without a profession, without a citizenship, without an opinion, without a deed by which to identify and specify himself—and different in general, representing nothing but his own absolutely unique individuality which, deprived of all expression within and action upon a common world, loses all significance" (302).

The workers retain no 'universal citizenship' that would grant them human rights; there is no legal body of intrinsic human rights recognized within Dubai. It is up to organizations such as the UN, HRW, or individuals, such as Sinclair and Musabih, to address the issue. Giorgio Agamben furthers the idea that there is no permanent status of man in himself with regards to the law of a nation-state.

## Dubai as a Sign of "Bare Life"

Agamben insists that we are all at risk of becoming Arendt's "human beings in general," who are not allowed

to pursue any self-actualization above work and survival. Agamben refers to individuals reduced to such a position as Homo Sacer. Sacer literally means "set aside." Thus, a Homo Sacer is a "the sacred or accursed man," a term used in Ancient Rome to denote banned individuals who could be killed by anyone, yet not sacrificed in a religious ritual (Agamben Homo 8-10). The term applies to the construction workers in that they have been set outside of society, subjected to dangerous conditions, and deprived of their humanity. Agamben goes on to claim that our task is thus to "find the courage to call into question the very principle of the inscription of nativity and the trinity of state/nation/ territory which is based on it" and reestablish the old concept of people in place of our present concept of nation (Agamben "We"). Only through such an act, Agamben insists, can man's political survival be realized in the present.

Slavoj Zizek, in his work, Welcome to the Desert of the Real, further explores the position of the tolerated "others" on the outskirts of society, who merely work to send money back home to their families. Zizek asks, what if "we are 'really alive' only if we commit ourselves with an excessive intensity which puts us beyond 'mere life'? What if, when we focus on mere survival, even if it is qualified as 'having a good time', what we ultimately lose is life itself?" (88). The construction workers have effectively been reduced to the post-modern Last Men, who have no other option than to labor for their survival. They have not been granted any freedom of mobility, but are bused into construction sites early in the morning to work all day, and then bused to secluded barracks outside the city when their shift is over. They are "dying to work," included in the legal order of society solely in the form of its exclusion. The coordinates for change are simply not present in the city's current political situation.

In Dubai, a ruling family controls the entire country, so it is relatively easy to understand how they have gotten away with such poor treatment of migrant workers. This is what Zizek was referring to in his recent book, Living in the End Times, when he summarized Dubai's present situation as "beyond corruption" (x). Agamben and Zizek are not, however, employing this argument with hopes of carving out a public space in which a democratic 'renegotiating' of the limits that prohibit the Homo Sacer from becoming a full citizen could take place. They are asserting that, far from being an isolated issue in Dubai, this problem speaks directly to those under the sovereign rule of a nation-state, insofar as their rights as human beings are contingent upon their national status.

It is at this point that we must reexamine the nature of the hyperbolic rhetoric employed to address Dubai and its implications for the Western world. It is not sufficient to conclude that we in the West are simply wallowing in schadenfreude by taking interest in the scathing articles of Haari and the "Dubai Bashers." The question of whether or not it is fair to refer to Dubai in such a manner is, in the end, of little consequence. The consumption of these exaggerated, dare say commodified, journalistic images has obscured our view of the eerily similar problem in the United States and the other Western countries from which these articles come. The situation we see in Dubai concerning the rights of construction workers ironically reveals the paradigmatic structure of our own nation-state; we have averted our eyes from the plight of our migrant workers to lambast the actions of a young country bent on burgeoning to the point of hyper-realistic excess. Perhaps it is time to reposition the searing magnifying glass of our inquiries above that country, which ultimately provided the operative model for Dubai in the first place—our own.

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# Where The Tin Lizzy Took Us

## William Matthew McCarter

## Introduction

Contemporary community college students often have full time jobs while they are full time students and many of them are taking care of children or other family members while they work and attend school. In spite of the fact that they have little time to really reflect on their learning or the world at large because they are just too busy trying to keep the lights on, most of them manage to get their school work done and, for the most part, they do pretty good work. However, occasionally, things happen that make you wonder about this next generation of Americans and what our world is going to be like when they are in charge. I had one of those moments a few years ago at a school sponsored event.

During a faculty presentation on Black History Month, one of our college's students said, "I don't care about history. If it happened before I was born, it really doesn't matter." My first thought was to ask the student how she felt about Christianity. Our two thousand year wake for Jesus Christ certainly happened before she was born and was likely pretty relevant to her life whether she was a practicing Christian or not. At first, I was shocked that anyone enrolled in college would say something like that, but I did feel good that our students felt comfortable enough with our faculty that they could at least be honest. The student's comment was essentially that – brutal honesty. And, really, it shouldn't be that surprising that history is irrelevant to this generation. Russell Jacoby, Distinguished Professor of Critical Studies and author of Picture Imperfect: Utopian Thought for an Anti-Utopian Age writes that the belief that the future will be better than the present is gone. "Young people now seem to have a sense that living for today is about the best that they can do" (Jacoby, 2007, xii).

My second thought in reaction to our student's claim about history was of Aldous Huxley. After all, the "messiah" of Huxley's Brave New World was Henry Ford and throughout the novel, a slogan that was attributed to Ford – "history is bunk" – is honored and elevated to the status of commandment. In Huxley's novel, Huxley was primarily concerned with some of the very things that I believe really impact our society in very profound ways – the fetish of youth and the dangers of mass consumerism. In addition, Huxley illustrated a mechanical and pharmaceutical manipulation of the human psyche, nearly predicting the arrival of genetic engineering and Prozac by nearly a century. Huxley seemed to be concerned with the industrialization and mass production of the early twentieth century and his concern was manifested in the form of pervasive references to his "mechanical messiah," Henry Ford. The "T" from Ford's Model T was a sacred symbol of Huxley's society and served as a kind of crucifix for the "priest of production" – those leaders that Huxley called Fords. In addition, Huxley marked time in history using "A.F" or "After Ford." Ford's Day was also celebrated in this Brave New World and seems to be both the 4th of July and Christmas in that society (Huxley, 2006; Jacoby, 2007).

Henry Ford, Dearborn, Michigan's favorite son and one of the industrial heroes of the 20th Century, once said "history is bunk. We want to live in the present. The only history that is worth a tinker's damn is the history we make today." One might argue that Henry Ford's idea of history being "bunk" is one of the things that make him an American. We Americans are not very good at thinking about history. We are such a young nation compared to other countries that, we really don't even have a history in the same way that other regions around the globe have a history. While Europeans living in Spain or France can trace their history back for nearly a thousand years, we have 1776. While nation's in the Middle East can say that they are living in "the cradles of civilization," we are the New World – a modern world – the children of the Enlightenment. While aristocrats from other nations often have four or more

names and the most important of those are their dynastic family names, in our supposed classless egalitarianism, we Americans call each other Hank and Dale. We Americans have a history but if there is a central theme to our American history, it is that we have a history of forgetting how to remember the past.[1]

This inability to remember the past is somewhat consistent with one of the premises of what philosophers (and perhaps historians) might call modernity. Richard Hooker, a professor at Washington State University, provides a concise and complex definition of modernity as simply being "the sense or the idea that the present is discontinuous with the past, that through a process of social and cultural change life in the present is fundamentally different from life in the past" (Hooker, 1999). From the beginning, our America has seen itself as being fundamentally different from the political and cultural traditions that came before it and perhaps this break with the past has contributed to what appears to be the disjointed constructions of our past.

As a country, we do not have a national epic like The Iliad or Beowulf. The closest thing that our nation has to a national epic is the narrative of the Lewis and Clark expedition and this narrative isn't so much a narrative about a culture or civilization, as it is a narrative about progress – a narrative of westward expansion. It is a narrative of a frontier that can be invented and reinvented by those who choose to settle there. Our national epic is ephemera and there is no greater break from tradition than that. Perhaps this break from tradition is why "history is bunk" and why we don't see a need to dig through the ash heap of our past. Perhaps it is unnatural for us to look toward history in critical reflection – it is not consistent with our modernist frames of reference or habits of mind. Then again, perhaps that is the very reason that we need to cultivate this kind of critical consciousness even more because this way of thinking is something that does not come natural to us. Perhaps this is why we should think about our own historicity to see just where Henry Ford's Tin Lizzy took us and where we go from there.

## Henry Ford

In many ways, Henry Ford's Ford Motor Company is the pinnacle of 20th century industrial manufacturing that produced revolutionary technological, social, and economic changes still being felt well into the 21st century. In the first half of the 20th century, the skilled workforce of what had been a craft based production was usurped by the unskilled labor of mass production and new power relations were at first, constructed in the industrial workplace, and then throughout much of society. The transformation of a craft based production to mass production virtually created the market economy as we know it. These economies of scale were created by financially spreading the fixed expenses out over larger volumes of products in order to reduce unit costs. Through the exploitation of the division of labor by transferring the knowledge of production from the craftsman to the machine and by combining the logistical support for the enormous workforce necessary to create an economy of scale, Ford's model of mass production became the model for almost all of the industrial manufacturing in the 20th century. These economies of scale also engendered public policies, institutions, and government mechanisms that eventually led to what we would eventually become known as Fordism (Polyani, 1944).

Under Ford's mass production, not only were the parts interchangeable, but so were the workers. According to James Womack, in The Machine that Changed the World, mass production carried the division of labor to its ultimate extreme in that the assembler had only one task – to put two nuts on two bolts or perhaps to attach one wheel to each car. He assembly worker didn't order parts, procure his tools, repair his equipment, inspect for quality, or even understand what workers on either side of him were doing. The role of the assembly worker had the lowest status in the factory (1990). Womack goes on to add that in some plants, the management team actually told assembly workers that they were needed only because automation could not replace them yet (1990). Essentially, proponents of this mode of production believed that activities should be broken down into the simplest of steps and then controlled by management from up above.

By moving away from a craft based production where skilled workers had a great deal of control over their conditions of work, mass production shifted toward the use of less skilled labor operating machines that now performed the skilled labor of the craftsman giving the capitalists more control over the workplace. Prior to this paradigm shift from craft based production to mass production, workers often knew more about the workplace and the work that they were doing than the people who hired them. This gave these skilled workers a great deal of power. However, as the skills shifted from the workers to the machines that the workers operated, human judgment was replaced with rules, regulations, and a rigid structure. What would become known as Fordism was built on the

increased mechanization of the labor process that led to capitalist control over the workplace.

The influence of the work of Frederick Winslow Taylor can be seen throughout the shift from craft based production to the mass production of what would later become known as Fordism. In 1911, Taylor published The Principles of Scientific Management where he devised a means of detailing a division of labor in time and motion studies and a wage system based on performance (what is commonly called "piece work" in the factory). The main elements of Taylor's work are time studies, standardization, task allocation, and detailing exactly what workers should be doing (Taylor, 1967). These elements were, for Taylor, the elements of the mechanisms of management. Taylor's work solved several problems for the industrialists of the early 20th Century. In craft based production, workers knew more about the work that they were doing that the industrialists who had invested in their labor. Through task allocation, management understood more about work in terms of the bigger picture than those who were actually doing the work. The workers on the assembly line knew just enough to do their job, but not enough to leave the factory as a craftsman or to be paid the premium that one would get if one were a craftsman.

The industrialists owned the means of production in that they owned the factory, but through the use of what would become known as Taylorism, the industrialists would also own the skills of labor because those skills would belong to the mechanisms of mass production and not the laborers who were doing the work. Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist and philosopher, understood this too well. For Gramsci, "Taylor expresses the real purpose of American society – replacing in the worker the old psycho-physical nexus of qualified professional work, which demanded active participation, intelligence, fantasy, initiative, with automatic and mechanical attitudes" (Gramsci, 2002). "Taylorism" – the name for putting his principles into action - would go on to become the standard model for businesses worldwide.

## Henry Ford's Tin Lizzy

The early industrialization of America was very beneficial to the American states now commonly known as "The Rust Belt." America's waterways provided a natural transportation system to move raw materials from places like Minnesota's Mesabi Iron Range to manufacturing centers in places like Cleveland and Detroit. In addition, railroads could easily transport coal from places like West Virginia and Pennsylvania. In fact, railroad transportation was so important to the automotive industry in Michigan that many of the earliest automobile production plants were located in an area of Detroit known as Milwaukee Junction. It is here in Detroit, Michigan that we find Henry Ford near the turn of the century and in Milwaukee Junction that the invention that would change the landscape of American history and culture – the Model T Ford – was conceived and built.

After failing at two separate attempts to start a manufacturing company, success finally came to Henry Ford in 1903 when he formed the Ford Motor Company. In 1908, Ford introduced the Model T Ford – The Tin Lizzy - and it was a huge success because of its durability and technological innovations. In contrast to earlier manufacturers, like Ransom Olds, who sought to build playthings for the rich, Henry Ford said "I will build a great motorcar for the masses… constructed of the best materials, by the best men to be hired, after the simplest designs that modern engineering can devise… so low in price that no man making a good salary will be unable to own one and enjoy with his family the blessing of hours of pleasure in God's great open spaces" (html). However, Ford had a problem: his motorcar cost $825 dollars in 1908. In order for his design to be the "motorcar for the masses," Ford had to find a way to bring the costs down so that he could sell his product for less money and more people could afford to own one.

Ford and his engineers were able to raise their production levels of the Model T and also to reduce costs in the years following its debut in 1908. Ford's initial assembly plant was located on the corner of Piquette and Beaubien Streets in Detroit. It is on the second floor of the Piquette Plant that Ford found a way to solve his production problems and fulfill his dream of creating a "motorcar for the masses." Legend has it that Henry Ford visited a meat packing plant near Chicago where they employed some of Taylor's principles of scientific management. In this particular meat packing plant, the animal carcasses hung on hooks that moved throughout the factory on a conveyor system. Instead of each worker being a trained butcher that could cut up the entire carcass, each of the workers was trained to do one particular task in the butchering process. So, instead of having a skilled butcher that was capable of doing the entire job of cutting up the carcass, the factory employed several unskilled workers who could only create T-Bone steaks, roasts, or hamburger. When Henry Ford returned to Detroit, he gathered his management team on

the second floor of the Piquette Plant and pulled an automobile chassis across the floor while the management team assembled an entire Model T Ford through a series of simple steps.

Henry Ford quickly built his Highland Park Plant and it is in this plant that Ford and his engineers are credited with creating the model of mass production that used the first moving assembly lines in 1914. Ford's assembly line increased labor productivity tenfold and permitted stunning price cuts in The Tin Lizzy – from 780 dollars in 1910 to 360 dollars in 1914. After a conveyor belt was added in 1916, the Highland Park Plant produced more than 700,000 Model T Fords. This brought the price down to 290 dollars by 1924 and by 1927, Ford Motor Company had produced more than 15 million Model T Fords. In fact, by 1927, Ford Motor Company could produce a car every 60 seconds. After that, the term Fordize was used to standardize a produce and manufacture it by mass means at a price so low that the common man can afford to buy it (Abernathy, 1978; Hounshell, 1984). After moving from the Highland Park Plant to the Rouge Plant, Ford ultimately made everything he needed for his cars from the raw materials to the finished product. Iron, coal, rubber, and other raw materials would come into one end of the manufacturing facility and an automobile would come out of the other side. Ford developed this idea of vertical integration for several reasons but two of these stand out more than others. First, Henry Ford had perfected mass production techniques so well that he could manufacture the parts that went onto his automobiles for less money than it would take to purchase them from a supplier. In addition, Ford could coordinate the flow of raw materials and meet the demands of his assembly lines much easier than the suppliers who used to provide him with parts for his assembly line (Chandler, 1977).

What we must realize is that the system of mass production is far more complex than just a new way of manufacturing products. This new industrial technology also impacted the early 20th Century socially in terms of the transformation of work. The early automobile manufacturers (Ford included) primarily "assembled" parts from an outside supplier. Often the parts weren't machined exactly right and they had to be filed down and "worked" into the final assembly. As the manufacturing technology got better and these parts became more standardized and reliable, this was no longer necessary and as a result, these skilled machinists could be replaced by assemblers. Ford's institutionalization of Taylor's principles of scientific management helped to usher in a whole new set of institutionalized relationships between capital and labor and among capital, labor, and political institutions as well. Antonio Gramsci was perhaps the first person to recognize and write about the potential political and cultural significance of what he called "an ultra-modern form of production and of working methods" (Gramsci, 2002). The institutionalization of this system of mass production required capital to exercise a combination of force and persuasion in the work place and, as a consequence, this new kind of capitalism became embodied in cultural practices and social relations that would extend far beyond the workplace.

For example, those machinists who had once been relied upon to solve problems and who had once had a great deal of autonomy over their work suddenly became assemblers who put nut number 86 on bolt number 86 in a regimented and structured assembly process. This assembly process of tedious and repetitive work led to workers being alienated from their work. Unlike skilled craftsman type work, assembly work was not very rewarding. Professor Stephen Meyer III, author of The Five Dollar Day: Labor Management and Social Control in The Ford Motor Company, talks about this when he writes that one Ford worker commented, "If I have to put nut number 86 on bolt number 86, 86 more times, I am going to be nut number 86 in the Detroit Mental Hospital" (Meyer, 1981). Assembly line work is unpleasant in a mass production environment. It is physically demanding, requires high levels of concentration, and can be excruciatingly boring. As a consequence, Ford experienced very high labor turnover, 380 percent in 1913. (Even today, double-digit absenteeism is common in mass-production assembly plants, necessitating a buffer stock of utility workers, who fill in for the assemblers that fail to show up at the start of each shift).

As a result of this changing nature of work, Ford and the other auto makers had to find a way to deal with their huge turnover and absentee problem in their laborers. According to the somewhat stylized facts, Ford, believing "men work for only two reasons: one is for wages, and one is for fear of losing their jobs," dealt with labor turnover by doubling pay to $5 a day; that other manufacturer's emulated Ford's wage policies along with his production methods; and that eventually all employers were forced to bring wages into line with those who offered unskilled labor in manufacturing. In other words: premium pay for putting up with what Gramsci described as mass production's "monotonous, degrading, and life draining work process" (Gramsci, 2002). Ford was partially successful in that the rate of turnover fell from 370% to 16% in 1915. However, when the labor force got tight in Detroit during World War I and the war inflation took its toll on the value of wages, Ford's 5 Dollar Day no longer meant anything to workers and increases in the wages at the plant would not produce the increased productivity that Ford was looking for. In the mid 1920's, one production worker described the relentless pace and intense effort which his job required, and the

consequences of failing to meet those standards: "You've got to work like hell in Ford's. From the time you become a number in the morning until the bell rings for quitting time you have to keep at it. You can't let up. You've got to get out the production… and if you can't get it out, you get out" (quoted in Rupert, 1995: 111). In a few years, the Great Depression would come to the United States. Michael Aglietta suggests that the Great Depression came out of the uneven early development of intensive accumulation, revolutionizing production in the US without simultaneously transforming consumption and the living conditions of the working class (Aglietta, 1979). Although Henry Ford sought to create an automobile "so inexpensive that everyone could own one", that was not the case with the plethora of consumer goods available in the 1920's. Aglietta claims that the result of class inequality and exploitation was a catastrophic economic imbalance as the rapidly growing sector of production outpaced consumption (Aglietta, 1979). As a result of the Great Depression and the rise of labor unions, the social institutions of mass production began to emerge in the early 20th century. The social struggles of the 20's and 30's extended into the post World War II era and the social institutions of mass production – what we now refer to as Fordism – emerged.

## From Dirt Roads to Route 66: Fordism in Post War America

The term "Fordism" refers to the system of mass production and mass consumption that was characteristic of the developing economies from the 1940's through the 1960's. Under Fordism, the science of mass production combined with the social phenomenon of mass consumption to produce sustained economic growth and widespread material advancement. For Michael Aglietta, Fordism was the regulative principle of a macro economic and social regime of accumulation involving very specific forms of capitalist production as well as social consumption norms (Aglietta, 1979). Essentially, Fordism led to the construction of new power relations in the workplace and the promise of massive increases in productivity led to the widespread imitation of Fordist modes of production. In addition to these key elements in manufacturing, there were also key elements in terms of labor and its politicization. In the post war years, trade unions were subdued by management. Instead of trying to subdue the unions through force, the capitalists subdued the unions through prosperity. Workers were offered a higher standard of living than they might have gotten before these Fordist principles were adopted throughout the manufacturing sector of America's economy. In the post war years, the mass production of Ford was synthesized with Taylor's principles of scientific management and John Maynard Keynes economic policies to produce a society in which nearly all of those living in that society functioned within the Fordist superstructure.

John Maynard Keynes' economic theory served as the vehicle in which Fordism could be spread throughout the United States. During the Great Depression, classical economic theorists defined economic collapse as simply being a lost incentive to produce. They believed that mass unemployment was caused only by high wages. For these classical economists, the solution to our economic problems was to cut wages. John Maynard Keynes saw wages as being much more complicated than these classical economists. Keynes argued that in order to boost employment, real wages would have to go down and would have to fall more than prices. This would reduce consumer demand and would likely make matters worse. No one really listened to Keynes in the early years of the Depression. However, after the recession of 1937, Franklin Roosevelt launched a $5 billion dollar spending program in the spring of 1938. This magnified the role of the federal government in the national economy and would have a profound effect on the role that the national government would play in economic policy for much of the remainder of the 20th century (Keynes, 2002).

In addition to Roosevelt adopting Keynesian fiscal policy, he also contributed to the passing of The Wagner Act and the creation of National Labor Relations Board. The Wagner Act is a kind of "bill of rights" for American workers and led to the expansion of labor unions like the UAW, the AFL-CIO, and the Teamsters Union from the late 1930's through the 1960's. The attack on Pearl Harbor and America's subsequent involvement in World War II led to increasing government partnerships with business in the "war economy" with government bankrolling business. Keynesians later argued that by spending vastly more money – using "fiscal policy" – the government could stimulate the economy through the "multiplier" effect. In the post-war years, Keynes's policy ideas were widely accepted around the globe. In this era of new liberalism and social democracy, most western capitalist countries enjoyed low, stable unemployment and modest inflation. Once Keynesian economics was adopted, economic policy placed an emphasis on consumption or consumerism.

Under Fordism, laborers were not required to be skilled labor because under Henry Ford's model of mass

production, the knowledge was transferred from the worker to the machine. This doesn't necessarily mean that the workers had to be unskilled or that the workers were uneducable. The workers could be skilled workers and many of these workers were, but their skills were not needed in the plant because the skill resided in the machine and not the worker. While these workers could be relatively unskilled, they could form unions and, as a result, earned relatively high wages. Most employees in a Fordist structure were able to purchase the products they produced and the Keynesian economic policies of the federal government protected domestic markets from outside competition that created a stable market for those products.

William Levitt, the father of modern American suburbia, once said, "No man who owns his own house and lot can be a communist. He has too much to do."[2] Not only was Fordism an innovative business practice for manufacturers and the standard economic model for much of the post war Western world, but it also served as a bulwark against communism during the Cold War. Mark Rupert makes this point abundantly clear when he writes: "In the postwar context of Cold War fears, and access to an unprecedented affluence, such challenges were contained within the bounds of a vision of liberal capitalism as the social system best able to secure – on a global scale – individual rights and liberties and a more generalized prosperity" (Rupert). The unions were, essentially, junior partners of the state and capital in a venture to reconstruct the capitalist world order.

However, the ability of these workers (who despite their talents) were doing unskilled labor in the factories to make substantial gains in terms of wages and benefits was largely dependent upon their political power. After the Wagner Act passed in World War II, workers had a tremendous amount of political power. During the war, because America was at or near full employment in order to produce products for the Department of Defense, workers also had a tremendous amount of political power. By the 1950's, the rise of mass production had made industrial workers the largest single group in nearly every developed country in the West. Organized labor was the political backbone of the postwar Keynesian liberal democracy. Because of the marriage of Ford's mass production and Keynesian economics, nearly half of the world's industrial production came from the United States. This was the economic engine that rebuilt Europe as a result of the Marshall Plan and supported the already emerging military-industrial complex and consumer society of the late 20th and early 21st centuries (Aglietta, 1979).

Fordism began to break down in the late 1960's and America's industrial production has been in decline since 1973. Since that time, Western economies have experienced slow or no economic growth, rising inflation, and growing unemployment. Fordism, supported by Keynesian economic policies, was beginning to reach its limits. Once the economy started slowing down, real wages could not continue to grow and capital began an assault on labor. This is the very thing that Daniel Bell envisioned in his book The Coming of Post-Industrial Society. Bell argued that post-industrialism would be information led and service oriented. Bell also asserted that the post industrial society would replace the industrial society. For Bell, there are three components to a post industrial society: 1.) a shift from manufacturing to services; 2.) the centrality of the new science based industries and 3.) the rise of new technical elites and the advent of a new principle of stratification (Bell, 1976). Antonio Gramsci also discussed this in his Prison Notebooks, when he writes that the current means of production and political economy will "be superseded by the creation of a new psycho-physical nexus, both different from its predecessor and superior. As a consequence, a part of the old working class will be eliminated from work, and perhaps from the world" (Gramsci, 2002). As a result of the globalization of capital and labor, Fordism is giving way (if it hasn't already completely surrendered) to Daniel Bell's post industrial society. The Cold War is over and, as a result, the prosperity that labor has enjoyed is evaporating as well. Labor no longer needs to be the junior partner of government and industry.

The new junior partners are all members of the World Trade Organization. Because of the role that the WTO plays in economics, the United States and some of the other developed nations have withdrawn from the economic sphere. What was once called "political economy" is now just economics. Because of this newly discovered global laissez-faire, the economies of developed nations have shifted from being grounded in manufacturing to being increasingly dependent upon the service sector and the knowledge sector for economic growth. Meanwhile, manufacturing has moved away from the west into developing nations. One example of this phenomenon of deindustrialization in developing nations is the closing of eleven automobile plants in Flint, Michigan and the opening of eleven new plants in Mexico. Because of these seismic shifts in the global economy, Americans increasingly realize that there is no connection between corporate profits and rising standards of living and that their ability to have any control over these economic decisions is limited at best. America may have driven the Tin Lizzy through the 20th century and America may have gotten its kicks on Route 66, but now, in the 21st century, America is broke down in Barstow.

## Walking across the California Desert

While Ford's mass production helped the Ford Motor Company to "produce a motorcar for the masses," and the inexpensive consumer goods that came as a result of Fordism, these things have not come to us without costs. Huw Beynon illustrates one of these costs in his book, Working for Ford. Beynon explains that working in a car plant involves coming to terms with the assembly line. 'The line never stops,' you are told." While this kind of mindless work may be suitable for someone who is functionally illiterate or unthinking, (at least according to Frederick Taylor's research on scientific management) most, if not all, workers have to force themselves to temporarily become more like the unthinking machine demanded by Taylorism. Beynon explains that when he is at work, his mind is a blank. In fact, he makes it go blank in order to deal with the mundane and repetitive tasks he must endure to work at Ford (Beynon, 1975). Now, we must ask ourselves: "What kinds of literacy are necessary to work in a factory that produces a car every sixty seconds and how do people learn that literacy?" The historian, Howard Zinn, makes the connection between education and economics when he writes "it was in the middle and late nineteenth century that high schools developed as aids to the industrial system" (Zinn, 2010, 263). Zinn supports his argument with the work of Joel Spring, author of Education and the Rise of the Corporate State. For Spring, "the development of a factory-like system in the nineteenth century schoolroom was not accidental" (Zinn, 2010, 263).

For Spring, "the spread of public school education enabled the learning of writing, reading, and arithmetic for a whole generation of workers, skilled and semiskilled, who would be the literate labor force of the new industrial age. It was important that these people learn obedience to authority" (Zinn, 2010, 263). This kind of literacy is a literacy of obedience. It is a compliant literacy that emphasizes following instructions and doing what is required.[3] While this kind of literacy might have worked for Ford and Taylor, it didn't necessarily work for their employees. Nor does it work for us now. There has been significant research on Fordism and consumerism and what it has meant for 20th century America. These studies discuss the movement from craft based production to mass production and even the move away from industrialism and toward a post industrial society. While the Tin Lizzy has taken us through the million miles of changes that society experienced during the 20th century, perhaps the most important American landscape in the rear view mirror is the landscape of our own thought and how we approach our own thinking.

This leads us back to our student who cared so little for history. I wonder if it was the economic uncertainty that seems to mark our particular time and space in the world that causes young people to enter "the era of acquiescence, in which we build our lives, families and careers with little expectation the future will diverge from the present" (Jacoby, 2007, xi) or, if it is, in part, the result of what Paulo Freire called the banking concept of education. Freire writes "in sum: banking theory and practice, as immobilizing and fixating forces, fail to acknowledge men and women as historical beings" (Freire, 2002). We must remember that throughout the journey riding the Tin Lizzy through the 20th century, we have two very dominant social forces at work. First we have the Fordist and Taylorist manufacturing principles coupled with the Keynesian economic principles. In addition, we have an education system that, according to Joel Spring, was conceived with the goal of producing an industrial army of workers to keep the wheels and gears of industry turning. Men and women were there in the factory because they were not quite machines and there weren't machines that could do this "not quite machine" work. An education "based on a mechanistic, static, naturalistic, spatialized view of consciousness" (Freire, 2002) was the education that was necessary to create a compliant and obedient workforce. If we accept that Fordism lies within the economic base of any given 20th century capitalist society, then we also must realize that the institutions in the superstructure (especially the institutions that educate) are there to reinforce the economic base. Could it be that this model of education "based on a mechanistic, static, naturalistic, spatialized view of consciousness" (Freire, 2002) coupled with the expectation that the future will not be any different than the present (Jacoby, 2007) have contributed to the death of our conception of history?

The 1970's marked the beginning of a period of slower growth and increasing income inequality. One could attribute much of the income inequality to the shift toward a post industrial society. Fordism has been transformed into new manufacturing principles based on a flexible system of production that comes out of the Japanese management system. These flexible systems of production are characterized by drastic reductions in information costs and overheads, total quality management, just-in–time inventory control, and leaderless work groups. These changes in production have also led to changes in consumption. These changes include the globalization of consumer goods markets, faster product life cycles, and greater product/ market segmentation and differentiation. In short, Fordism has been replaced with a system of production that we could call "Toyotaism." Essentially, the entire post war economy has undergone what Thomas Kuhn, the author of The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, calls a

paradigm shift which is a term that he uses to explain how the nature of inquiry within a particular field is abruptly transformed (Kuhn, 2002). In order for this to happen, we have to reach some kind of critical mass in which the current way of thinking breaks down and needs to be re-evaluated.

Capital, with the help of its political institutions, has already undergone this paradigm shift. However, although the social, culture, and political capital of labor is at an all time low (and doesn't appear to be rebounding from this steady decline), the best thing that labor can come up with in terms of ameliorating its condition is a nostalgic return to the halcyon days of organized labor. Essentially, all labor seems to be capable of is conceiving of a more liberal society firmly grounded in Fordist modes of production and Keynesian economics. In an age of what seems like a constant state of permanent emergencies, we have become utilitarian in our efforts to fix what we have instead of reinventing the here and now. While it goes without saying that the kind of society that we want – the kind of society that we need – cannot be achieved without a strong economic base, we cannot ignore the globalized marketplace in which any nation's success depends on the innovative conceptual, creative, and technical skills of its workforce. This is the challenge of our moment in history. Our economic, political, and social models have been collapsing for quite some time and are giving way to something else as we move further into a globalized post-modern, post-industrial world. While, arguably, we, as a society, have been trying to come to terms with that shift economically and politically, our way of approaching education has not kept pace with these other paradigm shifts.

One of my former colleagues once said something that I will never forget. He said, "We know that there are going to be jobs in the future, but I don't think that we can say what these jobs are going to be or even what to call them." He went on to add, "Teaching students today is a lot like training athletes for the Olympics… only we don't know what event we are training the athletes for… we don't know whether to tell them to go run, go swim, or go out into a field and throw stuff."[4] Twenty years ago, if someone had told one of my contemporaries, "Don't bother getting that job at the checkout line at the store. There's no future in that. It won't be long before people will just check themselves out and no one will need you to do your job," I imagine that they would think whoever said that to them was crazy. But it happened and who's to say that something like that can't happen in the future. We don't know what event that students will be competing in, but we do know that a better educated and more highly skilled population will be able to deal more effectively with change and if we know nothing else, we know that things change. We also know that education creates the kind of self efficacy that helps with one's ability to adapt. We also know that education makes it easier for individuals to learn skills related to their chosen careers (or the careers that are imposed upon them because of the economy) and improves their ability to learn while they pursue those careers. Therefore, in light of what we know about education and in light of what Joel Spring wrote about education being an aid to the industrial system, then we should have a system of education in place that mirrors the paradigm of "Toyotaism" that seems to be the mode and means of production in the 21st century.

If we are willing to accept the premise that education should mirror our economic paradigm (and I realize that most of us would say that it shouldn't), we have to wonder why there are so many Fordist elements in public education. Perhaps the most obvious example of these Fordist elements is the national standardized testing of No Child Left Behind (I like to call it "No Child Left Untested"). These standardized tests remind us of what Paulo Freire called "the banking concept of education." In an age where conceptual skills, problem solving skills, and creativity are the jobs skills necessary to compete as a knowledge worker in the new economy, multiple choice tests that barely register on the "identification" domain of Benjamin Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Domains seems like nothing more than an educational relic of our Fordist past that one might find in The Henry Ford, a museum of Americana in Dearborn, Michigan.[5] Instead, we find these things in the thousands of classrooms in America's public schools and from the time that children enter kindergarten until they graduate from high school, they are taught that this relic is the sole measure of their success or failure. We are still teaching the literacy of obedience and compliance – a Fordist industrial literacy – in a post-Fordist post-industrial world. Students who say "if you will just tell me what to do, I'll do it" or "I did what you told me, why didn't I get an 'A'" demonstrate the degree in which this compliant literacy permeates their conception of thinking and informs their thinking of what it means to be educated.

This, in turn, leads us to wonder "If we are clearly in a post-industrial paradigm, why are we still imposing a literacy of obedience and compliance on our potential workforce?" The answer to that question, I believe, is that it is more essential for government (and the capital that owns government) to create a compliant and obedient society than it is for government to create a society of knowledge workers for the new economy. With a little help from government, capital has, thus far, been able to import the knowledge workers that they need to carry out their business plans. And, thanks to the technological innovations in telecommunications, it is now easier to outsource

the jobs than it is to import the knowledge workers. Factory schooling for the masses may be inappropriate for the average worker in our post-Fordist age, but as long as it works for capital and enables our political institutions to maintain control of the masses, then it will likely persist. Our only real innovation in terms of education is using new technology to do the same thing that we have always done. In the last ten years, we have heard a lot of talk about computer literacy, however, computers only enable us to continue eliminating real content in terms of what students learn and reduce their learning to an exercise in how well they can finesse a machine. It's like shop class only cleaner. In a time when we should be trying to find ways to facilitate creative thinking, the factory that is public education only seems to be stifling it more.

In the late 19th and early 20th century, compliant literacy worked. Many of the jobs that were available were factory jobs that required very little, if any critical thinking skills and a lot of obedience. While we, as a society, try and figure out how we are going to deal with globalization, post-industrialism, and all of the other challenges of history, we also have to figure out how to equip the next generation of Americans with the kind of literacy that is compatible with that world so that they can transform their communities economically, politically, and socially. The quick answer to that is "higher education." However, many of those students from the culture of poverty or from working class families have a difficult time making the leap from a compliant literacy that stresses obedience to the kind of literacy that is necessary to become an autonomous thinker in the 21st century. Adult students returning to school because the job that they used to have no longer exists are also challenged because, chances are, that student has spent several years in a routine production or in person service job that stressed obedience. If these students are ever going to take control of their lives and make things happen for them instead of waiting for things to happen to them, they must learn a literacy that stresses autonomous thinking and problem solving skills. The question is "how do they do that?" In The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, Thomas Kuhn argued that it is not possible to understand one paradigm through the conceptual framework and terminology of another paradigm. Albert Einstein concurred with Kuhn when he said "problems cannot be solved by the same level of awareness that created them."

So, how do we, as a society, move beyond our current level of awareness? For Paulo Freire, the answer to these questions lies within "critical consciousness." We need to "have a deepened consciousness" of our own situation so that we can "apprehend that situation as an historical reality susceptible to transformation." And we must take our own historicity as a starting point for that transformation. This is precisely why we need history. We must realize that history is not only about names and dates and wars and revolutions, but it is also about the way we think and imagine. Henry Ford might have said "history is bunk," but I am not entirely sure if he would agree that history doesn't matter. If history didn't matter to Henry Ford, then why did he collect so many artifacts? Why did he have a Greenfield Village? Surely there must have been something about the past that Ford thought was worth remembering and preserving? I would argue that history was very important to Henry Ford and that when Ford said "history is bunk" what he really meant was that while our lives may have been shaped by our history, our life is not determined by that history. This interpretation of Ford's assertion that "history is bunk" fits in with Paulo Freire's idea that people must "perceive their state not as fated and unalterable, but merely as limiting – and therefore challenging" (Freire, 2002). We are not predetermined by our history and that is why "history" is bunk, but at the same time, we need history in order to facilitate our own critical consciousness. We need history to do cultural work. We need to, as Freire says, "have a deepened consciousness" of our own situation so that we can "apprehend that situation as an historical reality susceptible to transformation" (Freire, 2002). We need history, but as Nietzsche says, "not in the way a spoiled loafer in the garden of knowledge needs it" (Nietzsche, 2010).

For Walter Benjamin, articulating the past historically does not mean to recognize it "the way it really was. It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger" (Benjamin, 1968, 255). Almost daily, we are reminded that we are living in dangerous times and our history – the history of the American century – is most definitely flashing up in the moment of our danger. It is up to us to seize hold of the memory of what it was like to think, to imagine, and to dream. The Tin Lizzy may have taken us across the 20th century and it may have been a good car, but now that we are broke down in Barstow, it may be time for us to start walking across the desert. While Henry Ford might have thought that "machinery is the new messiah" in the early 20th century, here and now in the 21st century, nearly a hundred years later, this deity's seat on the throne is tenuous at best because a machine cannot yet imagine, and despite being subjected to nearly a hundred years of compliant literacy, we still show signs of imaginative thinking. This imaginative thinking is the single candle that lights up the dark room of our own transformation.

In We the Living, Ayn Rand's character, Kira Argounova says "whoever places his highest conception above his own possibility thinks very little of himself and his life. It's a rare gift, you know, to feel reverence for your own

life and to want the best, the greatest, the highest possible, here, now, for your very own."[6] Kira is oppressed by Russian communism; we are oppressed by fascist corporatism. Perhaps that oppression was more palatable when it was coupled with Fordism, Keynesian economics, and consumerism; however, our oppressors appear to no longer need a middle class in order to function and remain profitable. As a consequence, they no longer need Fordism or Keynesian economics. If our global economy continues on its race to the bottom in terms of wages, there will no longer be any consumerism either and we will be left with nothing but our oppression and our oppressors. We will also be left with the machines. However, isn't it about time that we walked away from this new messiah? Isn't about time for us to pronounce this god dead? Isn't it time for us to, as Kira says "imagine a heaven and then not to dream of it, but to demand it?" In order to do this, we must accept that if we are going to make demands for ourselves, we must first make demands of ourselves. We must cultivate a transformation in our own thinking so that we can conceive of a journey to a destination that is beyond where the Tin Lizzy took us.

## Endnotes

1. Because of a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, I was able to study the legacy of Henry Ford in Dearborn, Michigan in the Summer of 2006. Much of the thoughts that I have about Ford and Fordism were synthesized from discussions that took place during the various workshops and lectures that occurred during this study.

2. Levitt's suburban track housing is probably the pinnacle of mass production. Levittown is also probably the pinnacle of the 1950's conformity as well.

3. I am deeply indebted to my former colleagues at Mid Michigan Community College. Barry Alford, Lucia Eldon, Jim Vandermey, and Bill Reader have all been a part of lengthy discussions about topics like compliant literacy, learned helplessness, and resistance in the composition classroom.

4. My former colleague Chuck Bowden, Professor of Sociology at Mid Michigan Community College, used this phrase as an argument for learning the humanities and social sciences.

5. For more on Benjamin Bloom's taxonomy, see http://officeport.com/edu/blooms.htm

6. I know that it must be a real shift to move from Fordism to Rand, however, I did this with real purpose. The right wing talking heads are always talking about "going Galt" and it appears that the moneyed interests are doing just that because no one is loaning anyone any money these days. However, I do not see this early Rand text as being pro capitalism as much as I see it as being anti-oppression. Perhaps, we should try and reframe Rand's message so that she appears to be more anti-Fordist than the prophetic priestess of American capitalism. Other than "reason," you really don't see Rand championing much of anything. While I can understand the argument that Fordism is not reasonable in that it doesn't really promote thinking, I am not sure that I can understand how our global fast capitalism can be any more reasonable than Fordism.

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# Aging in Europe: Implications and Possibilities

Jason L. Powell, Rebecca Steel

This article explores the relationship of old age and welfare in Europe. Indeed, foremost in European societies with developed welfare systems they are governed by concepts of risk and individualisation (Giddens, 1991). Alan Walker and Gerhard Naegele (1999) convey the critical message that there is a pressing need for governments and other agencies to respond to changing circumstances of an aging European population. European political processes have become preoccupied with the fiscal support of the delivery of social services to an aging population as this demographic shift alters the balance between those in work and paying taxes, and those in retirement receiving benefits and consuming health care and social services.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s European governments uniformly sought to introduce market dynamics into the delivery of services by creating quasi-markets that rely on internal commissioning and purchasing by providers. In the United Kingdom for example, legislation required that local authorities embark upon a phased program, directed by central government, of compulsory competitive tendering, with the strategy of decreasing the role of local authorities and stimulating greater provision of services by the private sector. This program, like its cousins elsewhere on the continent such as France and Germany, rested on the belief that a competitive market and a mixed economy of welfare inevitably provides services that are better and cheaper than those available through the public sector, the reasoning being that a protected public bureaucracy is capable only of furnishing services that are limited, inflexible, and indeterminate and many users are unable to obtain the services they require. For example, European governments assume that they can put in place a mixed economy of welfare to meet the needs of their populations and to facilitate consumer choice among the various services. However, the introduction of "choice" may in fact reduce the number of options available because a reduction in public sector provisions may not be matched by the development of a diverse range of service options in the voluntary and private sector (Phillipson & Powell, 2004).

Planning is necessary, particularly in light of the demographic changes. The statistical reality that Europe's population must inevitably age because the fertility boom in the late 1950s and early 1960s and the increasing expected average lifespan will greatly increase the number of older persons across the European Union from 2020 forward. The spectre of an aging population necessitates the dismantling of the welfare state and the introduction of a greater degree of reliance on personal financial provision and privately provided care arrangements. These proposals are linked to ideological shifts during the latter part of the 20th century, and the concomitant reassessment of the social contract between the state and its population. As a result, "cradle-to-grave" principles of post-war social planning have been replaced by policies which encourage those with resources to make provision for themselves, with the less well off depending on minimal state support. This exclusion has serious implications for the workings of EU states, for over time the issues raised will test the stability and security of health and political structures in all European countries.

In order to preserve the basic tenets of intergenerational solidarity and to develop a more inclusive society, it will be necessary to find ways in which the views of older people can be appropriately represented (Phillipson & Powell 2004). Older citizens must have a greater "voice" in the decision-making process of welfare services provision. The point made by Walker and Naegelhe (1999) is a bold one that a new political economy of aging is needed to engender social policy that rests on a broader view of what older persons need and the manner in which they can

contribute to and make a different society, rather than the currentpolicies that focus alone on pension arrangements and the provision of socialwelfare. New policies are needed to meet the requirements of the risk society.The politics of old age is not just about learning to live with an older populationand how to arrange the provision of services, but is more about rethinking thenature of modern society itself.

More specifically, in contemporary European society, risk is a broad concept that extends over a broad range of social practices that impinge on the experiences of older people. Current debates about older people and relationship to sexuality, crime, national security, food safety, employment and welfare are all underscored by risk (Phillipson, 1998). Awareness of the transnational nature of risk has led the United Nations to form its own Commission on Human Security. A recent report by the UN Commission suggests ways in which the security of older people, for example, might be advanced—from humanitarian strategies through to economic, health and educational strategies (Powell, 2006).

## The Populational Structure of Europe

The population structure of Western European countries has changed since the turn of the 20th century. Whereas in 1901, just over 6% of the population were at or over current pension age (65 in the UK for men and women), this figure rose steadily to reach 18% in 2001 (Powell, 2011).  At the same time, the population of younger people under age 16 fell from 35% to 20%. As European countries reach a relatively high level of population aging, the proportion of workers tends to decline. European countries, including France , Germany , Greece , Italy , Russia , and the Ukraine , already have seen an absolute decline in the size of their workforce. And in countries where tax increases are needed to pay for transfers to growing older populations, the tax burden may discourage future workforce participation. The impact on a Nation States gross domestic product will depend on increases in labor productivity and that State's ability to substitute capital for labor. Less developed countries can shift their economies from labor-intensive to capital-intensive sectors as population aging advances. Options for more European nation states may be more constrained. The 'rolling back' of pensions promises is just one symptom of a shift in European history: the 'graying of the baby-boom generation' (Phillipson 1998). The percentage of 60-year-olds and older are growing 1.9% a year. This is 60% faster than the overall global population. In 1950 there were 12 people aged 15 to 64 to support each one of retirement age. Currently, the global average is nine. It will be only four-to-one by 2050 (Powell, 2005). By then numbers of older people will outnumber children for the first time. Some economists fear this will lead to bankrupt pensions and lower living standards. It is interesting that in Germany this fear is becoming a battleground for political electioneering. For example, Germany has the highest population in Europe and the third oldest population in the world, which presents both critical questions on public finances to provide pensions and healthcare and an opportunity for innovations in the marketplace. Currently, aging has started to figure prominently in political discussions amongst political parties as they vie for the elderly vote. The current Merkel administration (2007-) has been criticized for increasing pensions while opponents talk about a "war of generations" requiring young people to pay for taxation for elder care (Powell 2011).

The trend has drawn further attention across Europe, where the working-age population will decline by 0.6% this in 2010. By 2025 the number of people aged 15 to 64 is projected to dwindle by 10.4% in Spain, 10.7% in Germany and 14.8% in Italy. But aging is just as dramatic in such emerging markets as China - which is expected to have 265 million 65-year-olds by 2020 - and Russia and Ukraine (Cook and Powell, 2007).

Using evidence from the UK, the percentage of people of working age, that is 16-64, will drop from 64% in 1994 to 58% in 2031 (Powell, 2005). As the number of workers per pensioner decreases there will be pressure on pension provision.  This is evident now, in such areas of pensions and long term care, the retreat of the state made evident in the erosion of State Earnings Related Pay are forcing people to devise their own strategies for economic survival in old age (Phillipson 1998). Private pensions are slowly being introduced in order to prevent the 'burden' of an aging population. These are ways in which the State continues to rely on apocalyptic projections such as 'demographic time bomb' about aging populations in order to justify cuts in public expenditure (Powell 2005). Hence, the population of the UK, like that of other European countries, is ageing rapidly. There are only enough young people to fill one in three of the new and replacement jobs that will need to be taken up over the next decade. Older people take much of the responsibility for our social and civic life and for the care of children, the sick and the very old in the community. Yet the gap between wealth and poverty, choice and the absence of choice for older people is stark and growing wider

(Phillipson 1998). The UK government is at the time of writing seeking to promote a debate over what they envisage as a multi-billion pound deficit that will be found in care for the elderly in future.

## The Social and Economic Challenges of Global Aging

Population aging strains social insurance and pension systems and challenges existing models of social support. It affects economic growth, trade, migration, disease patterns and prevalence, and fundamental assumptions about growing older. Older people's living arrangements reflect their need for family, community, or institutional support. Living arrangements also indicate sociocultural preferences—for example, some choose to live in nuclear households while others prefer extended families (Estes, Biggs and Phillipson, 2003). The number, and often the percentage, of older people living alone is rising in most countries. In some European countries, more than 40% of women age 65 and older live alone (Walker and Naeghele 2000). Even in societies with strong traditions of older parents living with children, such as in Japan, traditional living arrangements are becoming less common. In the past, living alone in older age often was equated with social isolation or family abandonment. However, research in many cultural settings illustrates that older people, even those living alone, prefer to be in their own homes and local communities (Gilleard and Higgs, 2001). This preference is reinforced by greater longevity, expanded social benefits, increased home ownership, elder-friendly housing, and an emphasis in many nations on community care.

Global aging will have dramatic effects on local, regional, and global economies. Most significantly, financial expenditures, labor supply, and total savings will be affected. Changes in the age structures of societies also affect total levels of labor force participation in society, because the likelihood that an individual will be in the labor force varies systematically by age. Concurrently, global population aging is projected to lead to lower proportions of the population in the labor force in highly industrialized nations, threatening both productivity and the ability to support an aging population (Krug, 2002).

Coupled with rapid growth in the young adult population in Third World countries, the World Bank (1994) foresee growing 'threats' to international stability pitting different demographic-economic regions against one another. The United Nations (2002) views the relationship between aging populations and labor force participation with panic, recognizing important policy challenges, including the need to reverse recent trends toward decreasing labor force participation of workers in late middle and old age despite mandatory retirement in Western countries such as the UK (Powell, 2005). Social welfare provisions and private-sector pension policies influencing retirement income have a major impact on retirement timing. Hence, a major concern for organizations such as United Nations and World Bank centers on the number of such 'dependent' older people in all developing societies.

Some have argued that the rise of globalisation exerts unequal and highly stratified effects on the lives of older people (Estes and Associates 2001). In the developed world, the magnitude and absolute size of expenditure on programmes for older people has made these the first to be targeted with financial cuts. In Third World countries, older people (women especially) have been amongst those most affected by the privatization of health care, and the burden of debt repayments to the World Bank and the IMF (Estes and Associates 2001). Additionally, globalization as a process that stimulates population movement and migration may also produce changes that disrupt the lives of older people. And one must not forget either that they may comprise up to one-third of refugees in conflict and emergency situations - a figure which was estimated at over 53 million older people worldwide in 2000 (Estes and Associates 2001).

Nation states with extensive social programs targeted to the older population — principally health care and income support programs — find the costs of these programs escalating as the number of eligible recipients grows and the duration of eligibility lengthens due to global pressures (Bengston and Lowenstein 2003). Further, few countries have fully funded programs; most countries fund these programs on a pay-as-you-go basis or finance them using general revenue streams. Governments may be limited in how much they can reshape social insurance programs by raising the age of eligibility, increasing contribution rates, and reducing benefits. Consequently, shortfalls may need to be financed using general revenues.

Different countries age groups have different levels of pace of growth. It is possible for the elements of production—labor and capital—to flow across national boundaries and mitigate the impact of population ageing. Studies predict that, in the near term, surplus capital will flow from Europe and North America to emerging markets in Asia and Latin America , where the population is younger and supplies of capital relatively low. In another 20 years,

when the baby boom generation in the West has mostly retired, capital likely will flow in the opposite direction (May and Powell, 2007). Traditionally, labor is viewed as less mobile than capital, although migration could offset partially the effects of population aging. Currently, 22 percent of physicians and 12 percent of nurses in the United States are foreign born, representing primarily African countries, the Caribbean, and Southeast Asia (OECD 2007). The foreign-born workforce also is growing in most OECD countries. Over the next 10 years, the European experience will be particularly instructive in terms of the interplay of aging and migration (OECD 2007). Some pressure groups are now suggesting, for instance, that a rich city like London, that benefits from Ghanaian nurses in the National Health Service, has an ethical obligation to Ghana itself, to provide funds to support that country's health training system because the donot country is losing key personnel.

The life-cycle theory of consumption is that households accumulate wealth during working years to maintain consumption in retirement (Gilleard and Higgs 2001). The total of a country's individual life-cycle savings profiles determines whether households in that country are net savers or nonsavers at any point in time. A country with a high proportion of workers will tend to be dominated by savers, placing downward pressure on the rate of return to capital in that economy. Nation states with older populations will be tapping their savings and driving rates of return higher because of the scarcity of capital (Gilleard and Higgs 2001).

Retirement resources typically include public and private pensions, financial assets, and property. The relative importance of these resources varies across countries. For example, a groundbreaking study revealed that only 3% of Spanish households with at least one member age 50 or older own stocks (shares), compared to 38 percent of Swedish households (Walker and Naeghele 2000). The largest component of household wealth in many countries is housing value. This value could fall if large numbers of older homeowners try to sell houses to smaller numbers of younger buyers. How successfully this transition is managed around the world could determine the rise and fall of nations and reshape the global economy in the era of the post-credit crunch. Two key vehicles of growth are increases in the labor force and productivity. If nation states cannot maintain the size of their labor forces by persuading older workers to retire later then the challenge will be to maintain growth levels. That will be a particular challenge in Europe, where productivity growth has averaged just 1.3% since 1995. By 2024, growth in household financial wealth in the U.S., Europe, and Japan will slow from a combined 4.5% annual reduction now to 1.3%. That will translate into $31 trillion less wealth than if the average age were to remain the same (Cook and Powell, 2007).

Most of Europe's state-funded pension systems encourage early retirement. Now, 85.5% of adults in France retire from employment by age 60, and only 1.3% engage in employment beyond aged 65. In Italy, 62% of adults retire from full-time work by the age of 55. That compares with 47% of people who earn wages or salaries until they are 65 in the U.S. and 55% in Japan (Estes and Associates 2001).

Why the sudden attention to a demographic trend of global aging? In part, it is because the future is already dawning that global trends impact on state power. In South Korea and Japan, which have strong cultural aversions to immigration, small factories, construction companies, and health clinics are relying more on 'temporary' workers from the Philippines, Bangladesh, and Vietnam (OECD 2007). In China, state industries are struggling over how to lay off unneeded middle-age workers when there is no social safety net to support them.

What really has pushed aging to the top of the global agenda, though, are increasing fiscal gaps in part, due to the "global credit crunch" in the U.S., Europe, Japan, and elsewhere that could worsen as populations reach retirement age. While U.S. Social Security is projected to remain solvent until at least 2042, the picture is more acute in Europe. Unlike the U.S., where most citizens also have private savings plans, in much of Europe up to 90% of workers rely almost entirely on public pensions (Walker and Naeghele 2000). Austria guarantees 93% of pay at retirement, for example, and Spain offers 94.7%. Pensions and elder-care costs will increase from 14% of capitalist nations' gross domestic product to 18% by 2050 (Walker and Naeghele 2000).

As people live longer and have fewer children, family structures are also transformed (Bengston and Lowenstein 2004). This has important implications in terms of providing care to older people. Most older people today have children, and many have grandchildren and siblings. However, in countries with very low birth rates, future generations will have few if any siblings. As a result of this trend and the global trend toward having fewer children, people will have less familial care and support as they age (Bengston and Lowenstein 2004). Unless there is a fundamental shift in the views of 'Fortress Europe', Japan and other countries towards immigrants, and an overcoming of entrenched racial or racist attitudes towards migrants, some parts of the globe will be 'elderly heavy' while others will be 'elderly light'. Were migrants made more welcome in richer societies then one could envisage a space of carer flows, with more interactions and movements in either direction to the 'heavy' or 'light' end. Or, for example, one could have

elderly relocation in the same way as Japanese elderly are relocating into Thailand into new forms of 'transnational households', in order to seek cheaper care systems for their retirement (Toyota, 2006).

As a consequence of the global dynamics of aging, the changing societies of the post millennium are being confronted with quite profound issues relating to illness and health care, access to housing and economic resources including the retirement experience and pension provision. If demographic trends continue to escalate by 2050 the number of older people globally will exceed the number of young for the first time since formal records began raising questions of the power of the nation state in the context of global aging, and raising further global questions of distribution of power and scarcity of resources to an (global) aging population.

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