FAST CAPITALISM

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2017

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

About the Authors

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Organization & Environment, ultiBase, and Post-Communist Cultural Studies with Penn State University Press. From 1997-2010, he was Director of Graduate Studies, and he founded the OLMA program on the basis of his work with the Virginia Tech Cyberschool from 1994-2003. He continues to direct the Collaboratory for Digital Discourse and Culture that also he developed during the Cyberschool experiment. He has been awarded fellowships and grants by the National Endowment for the Humanities, Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the Carter G. Woodson Institute, the Center for Organizational and Technological Advancement, International Research and Exchange Board (IREX), the Department of State, and the Council for the International Exchange of Scholars (Fulbright Research/Teaching Award). During 1996, he was named Visiting Research and Teaching Scholar at the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, and in 1995 he was the Fulbright Professor of Cultural Theory and the Politics of Information Society at Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand. He has reviewed grant proposals in political science, sociology, and science studies for the National Science Foundation, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Austrian Science Fund, and the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology of New Zealand. Email: twluke@vt.edu .

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Dr. Joshua E. Olsberg's research seeks to understand the connections between culture, politics and personal identity. A first-generation Cuban-American, Dr. Olsberg has conducted ethnographic studies in Eastern Cuba, engaged in analysis of media coverage of Haitian politics and economics, and examined the way that those living in rural Mid-Missouri communities define the struggles they face in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Dr. Olsberg's work draws upon critical theories across disciplines, and he firmly believes that cross-disciplinary, collaborative scholarly efforts can lead to breakthroughs in our understanding of our societies and ourselves. He believes that teaching is a means of building and changing communities for the better, and that difficult dialogues within the classroom can lead to greater understanding and compassion for those who we perceive as different. Dr. Olsberg began at and Assistant Professor in Interdisciplinary Studies at National University in July 2015, and was previously a visiting faculty member at Southern Methodist University. He completed his PhD in Sociology, with a graduate minor in International Development, from the University of Missouri in 2014. He is a native of Fort Worth, Texas and enjoys traveling, hiking, and any sport that involves skates. Email: jolsberg@nu.edu .

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Michael A. Peters research interests focus on educational philosophy with a focus on contemporary philosophical movements to the framing of educational issues, especially philosophical and political economy questions of knowledge production, distribution and consumption. His recent writing and scholarly activity revolves around two interrelated areas: contemporary philosophy (critical theory, poststructuralism, hermeneutics, and analytic philosophy)

with a focus on philosophy of education, and; the politics of education, educational reform and welfare policy in NZ and elsewhere (http://www.michaeladrianpeters.com/; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Adrian_Peters). The two areas of interest theoretically inform each other. The deepest influences upon his thinking and writing include the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein and Michel Foucault. These philosophers provide a positive philosophical response to nihilism and to the fragmentation of value and dissolution of culture. Here the question of style is significant in understanding philosophy as a kind of writing. His major current projects include work on distributed knowledge, learning and publishing systems, and 'open education.' He has written over eighty books and some five hundred papers and chapters. My Google citation (at 27 Feb 2017) is 10,713 (5,259 since 2012) with an h-index of 48 (34 since 2012) and an i10-index of 185 (1123 since 2012). He is the executive editor of the SSCI journal, Educational Philosophy and Theory (T&F, 14 issues per year) for over 20 years, with strong engagement to rebuild the Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia (PESA). He is the founding editor of Policy Futures in Education, E-Learning and Digital Media (Sage), and Knowledge Cultures. In 2016 he established The Video Journal of Education and Pedagogy (https://videoeducationjournal.springeropen.com/, Springer) and The Editors' Collective (NZ, http://www.editorscollective.org.nz/) that he established to develop an experimental and innovative culture for academic publishing and collective writing, especially for emerging NZ scholars. He has been an advisor to world agencies such as UNESCO and to governments on these and related matters in Scotland, NZ, South Africa, USA (NSF) and the EU. He is Emeritus Professor at the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign), Professorial Fellow at James Cook University, and Distinguished Visiting Professor at Zhenzhou University, China. He was made a Lifelong Member of the Humanities Society of NZ, and The Society for Research in Higher Education (SRHE), and an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of NZ in 2010. He was awarded honorary doctorates by State University of New York (SUNY) in 2012 and University of Aalborg in 2015. Email: mpeters@waikato.ac.nz .

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Introduction to <u>Fast Capitalism</u> 14.1

Timothy W. Luke

This issue of <u>Fast Capitalism</u> is **in memoriam** for our colleague and friend, Ben Agger, who passed away unexpectedly on Tuesday, July 14, 2015 (<u>Star-Telegram</u>, 2015). As Professor of Sociology and Humanities at the University of Texas-Arlington, Ben also served as the Director of the Center for Theory, and founding editor of this journal, <u>Fast Capitalism</u>. Both of these projects are also based in the Sociology Program in the College of Liberal Arts at Texas-Arlington, and this journal was launched there during 2005 with issue 1.1.

During the week Ben passed away, most of the final editorial production work for 2015's issue 12.1 was already well under way. From July 14, 2015 on through the following weeks, many asked us if the journal would have a commemorative issue in recognition of Ben's life and work. I assured them that it would, although it would not necessarily be right away, given the amount of material we already had accepted for publication. Ironically, then, much of the delay in bringing out this issue for Ben is due to his successes with <u>Fast Capitalism</u> since its founding. During that next year, as we prepared issue 13.1 for publication in 2016, Ben's many friends, colleagues, and students, who we had asked to contribute to this issue, remained somewhat stunned by his sudden death. Not surprisingly, this reality made it more difficult than first anticipated to bring the current issue out quickly. For me, it is a tribute to Ben's good nature and gifted intellect. Few could comprehend that he was suddenly gone (Cargo, 2015), and no one wanted to let him go right away.

Slowly, this shock has worn away, and the full appreciation of Ben's rich and rewarding contributions to critical theory, digital humanities, cultural studies, methodological critique, and critical sociology more broadly have come to be appreciated. As this issue's contributors note, Ben's scholarly contributions in many fields are enduring and significant, and his multidimensional impact as an educator in many roles -- Dean, Department Head, Editor, Mentor, Professor, Teacher, and all-around University Citizen have left a tremendous legacy at the University of Texas-Arlington, University of Buffalo-SUNY, University of Waterloo in Ontario, and Bishop's University in Quebec (See Antonio, 2015: 825-827; and, Nickel, 2012: 128-154). Most of all, Ben is remembered as a generous, engaging, and brilliant individual, who daily sought to make a difference, and then made it in countless ways. I worked with him gladly for over 25 years, and feel very fortunate to have had such a friend, interlocutor, and partner for many fruitful scholarly collaborations (See Nickel, 2012: 14-41, 128-154).

After a year to eighteen months, more contributions finally did roll into the journal, and we now have this remembrance issue. Following my brief Introduction, the initial five comments by Robert L. Bing, Elisabeth Chaves, Bob Kunovich, Joshua Olsberg, and Jason E. Shelton present a range of individual thoughts about what Ben Agger meant to them, personally and professionally. The next two essays by Lukas Szrot and Mark P. Worrell are written in a comparable register, but they also develop more extended meditations on Ben Agger's career as a social theorist as well as his place in the field of sociology.

The next six articles are works either inspired by and/or written in recognition of Ben Agger's place in the larger field of critical social theory. David Arditi, the current University of Texas-Arlington-based editor of <u>Fast Capitalism</u>, returns to Theodor Adorno in his essay "Would Adorno Download Music? Piracy, the Recording Industry, and Reproduction Reconsidered" in which he relates the economic and social dynamics of the contemporary recorded music industry to Agger's work in cultural studies. Likewise, my contribution, "Exploring the Chaos of Commodification: From the Arcades to the Cascades with Benjamin and Leopold," also departs from Agger's critical theory-driven approach to cultural criticism as well as writers from the Frankfurt School. It focuses on Walter Benjamin's suggestive assessment of the dialectics of riches and ruination in the elaborate built urban environment

of the Paris Arcades for critical insights into how American mountain wilderness parks might also be decoded as another variety of complex built rural environment. Playing off of the thoughts of Aldo Leopold, the mid-twentieth century American environmental thinker, the essay explores how the whole Earth environment itself increasingly might be catalogued as an intricate built environment, which the Cascades Recreation Area outside of Pearisburg, Virginia well demonstrates. Robert Kirsch in his "Toward a Theory of Economic Development as a Mode of Flash Capitalism" picks up notions sparked by Agger's analyses of "fast capitalism" to ask how contemporary projects for local and regional economic development could be understood as "flash capitalism," which are organized in successive short bursts as much to buttress shaky myths about capitalist growth with media attention, expert management, and public-private capital partnerships as they are meant to create any truly lasting economic development. Much of Agger's theoretical work focused on the impact of the Internet and digital culture on postmodern capitalism. Michael A. Peters focuses on these concerns in his "Algorithmic Capitalism in the Epoch of Digital Reason," which traces the influence of cybernetic capitalism on knowledge, culture, labor, finance, and biopolitics. Doug Kellner's intense analysis, "Trump, Media Spectacle, and Authoritarian Populism," delves into the uncommon presidency of Donald J. Trump and his unending mobilization of media spectacles, which is fostering styles of governance through a dangerous new authoritarian populism in the United States. Tara Brabazon, in turn, leverages notions from Agger's thoughts on digital culture to explore the experiences of graduate-level teaching and learning in new digital environments in her essay, "5 Minutes to Hell: Time to Tell the Truth." As an academic dean, graduate supervisor, and university professor, she sees digitization, deterritorialization, and disintermediation creating new and different modes of education in her work with students at Flinders University in Australia. Scott McNall's contribution, "A Jeremiad for Ben: Things Fall Apart" also brings his appreciation of Agger's keen sociological criticism to assess life in the opening days of America's forty-fifth president, Donald J. Trump. McNall recounts how Agger himself might have interpreted the fluid rhetorical and political conditions that led to the American electorate voting in 2016 to "Make America Great Again."

The issue concludes with Stephen Turner's powerful personal and philosophical appraisal, "Ben Agger was a Blazing Intellect." He positions Agger's multi-faceted contributions to contemporary sociology, methodological debates, and the state of sociological theory from the 1970s into the early twenty-first century. A tribute to Ben Agger's quality as a thinker, innovator, and academic in the modern research university as it morphed into a key node in "the knowledge economy," Turner's study highlights how a free, original and well-grounded intellect can resist the formalism, emptiness, and banality of normal social science simply by pushing ahead to complete one's own work to meet the best of his or her own critical measures. Turner tacitly suggests Agger's thinking and writing, like Marx or the best of the Frankfurt School, does keep to his own vision, and ready to let it stand where it rests.

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Dr. Ben Agger: Colleague and Friend

Robert L. Bing III

The Early Years

This essay is a reflection of Dr. Ben Agger as a colleague and friend. I met Ben Agger when he was a candidate for the position of dean of the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Texas at Arlington. He was one of the brightest candidates in the selection pool; he was offered the position. I began a relationship with him immediately, as I was chair of the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice. We worked together through good and bad times for the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice. Ben advocated for my Department during some difficult times, when my unit was growing and the University was going through a period of entrenchment. In fact, I still have a memo written by then Dean Ben Agger articulating the needs of a unit with enormous growth potential; he helped argue for new faculty lines and increased funds for my department. In many ways, Ben was no non-sense in his approach to administration; he was data driven. Concomitantly, he was forward thinking as well. He recognized the potential of my discipline, even when faculty attrition was a problem. We had lost a faculty member to retirement and one to kidney cancer and another had left for placement in another unit. Ben challenged the university to help save the program. He also advocated for other academic units within the College. Ben was fair-minded in his approach to supervision and administration of all the units within the College. Of many attributes, he would make telephone calls or send cards with expressions of gratitude for service or accomplishment. One such card, dated, 10/26 reads, "…many thanks for your continued professionalism and collegiality. I especially appreciate your effort to enhance faculty and student diversity. - ben" Please note use of small caps to spell his name, which was typical of Ben's style, demeanor and humility. Over the years, we became friends, a status that ranks higher than being a colleague.

A Budding/Growing Friendship

My relationship with Ben extended beyond the UT Arlington campus; we both had kids enrolled at the Montessori Academy (in Arlington). We shared the joys of parenting wonderful kids. We both recognized that there was more to life than the challenges, politics and contradictions of academic life. As a colleague and friend, I could sense Ben's keen interest in both of his kids. In many ways, I learned by listening to Ben talk with his kids. He had a knack for using humor and candor; he was the consummate disciplinarian, companion and friend for his kids. I want to believe that he influenced me in the raising of my daughter. Ben and I enjoyed countless trips to Six Flags, an amusement park in the entertainment section of Arlington, TX. We enjoyed rides on the roller coaster with our kids. The trip to Six Flags was such a ritual, we had season passes and season parking. The visits to the amusement park and Montessori sponsored field trips were sacred times with our children; we did not use the time to talk about politics, tenure, nor enrollment issues at UTA. As such, it was easy to be with Ben off the campus or at his home for a birthday party. It is not often that a colleague becomes a true friend.

A Confidante

When his term as Dean and my tenure as chair ended, the relationship continued. My colleague Ben was supportive of my research and encouraged me to remain focused on it. We both agreed that no matter what happened, no one could take that away. Ironically, later in our careers at UTA, we were neighbors, with offices on the second floor of University Hall. Ben, a genius and true intellectual had become Director of the Center for Theory, within the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. He shared his ideas with me and invited me to the brown bags sponsored by the Center. I attended as many as I could. We talked more openly about politics and even university leadership, during this time period. It was easy to do, as we had both seen so much, including the successes and failures in leadership on the campus. If I had a concern and shared with Ben, it would remain confidential. This reality reflects character and the attributes of a colleague with a strong moral compass. My lament is that we never coauthored articles together on issues like social justice.

Ben, The Intellectual

Ben was a bright person; he was always aware of the shifts in politics at the national and international level. He valued all of the ideals of the academy, such as freedom of speech, scholarship and teaching. Through my lenses, Ben was the consummate instructor, there were always students around his office, motivated or enlightened by a classroom lecture. Concomitantly, Ben had the extraordinary gift of leadership, he continued to be actively involved as a leader within the department of sociology and anthropology. And in my opinion, he never retreated as many do, who have held prior positions of leadership and authority. As a colleague, Ben challenged you to be engaged and to overcome the landmines that exist in academe. I remember him talking about the importance of self-reflection and academic achievement. He influenced me to be more analytical about the politics of the world, including the politics of the academy.

Conclusion

In all, Ben was a true friend; he was relentless in his pursuit of scholarship, excellence and the truth. Thoughts of Ben reinforce our shared values that of all things, family and friends are fundamentally important. Like Ben, I pledged many years ago – to make a difference, to build bridges, to be reflective, to be inquisitive, to challenge students in the classroom, to leave a legacy and to champion the here and now.

Short Tribute to Ben Agger

Elisabeth Chaves

I never met Ben Agger. During my first year as a doctoral student, I was introduced to his scholarship through one of his former students. His concept of "literary political economy" became a guide star for my work during the PhD. The first article I published on the literary political economy of the then emergent trend of literary blogs found a home in his journal Fast Capitalism.[1] I was a somewhat non-traditional political and social theory student who had formerly studied law and urban planning. My previous exposure to critical theory had been one Doug Kellner article on television while an undergraduate. To say I was winging it as a first year PhD student immersed in the Frankfurt School would be an understatement. Thankfully, I had Agger's 1991 article, "Critical Theory, Poststructuralism, Postmodernism: Their Sociological Relevance," to assist me.[2] When I began to wonder how exactly academics could be critical theorists and employed, I turned to Ben and his sometimes co-author and co-editor, Tim Luke (also my dissertation advisor), as mentors and exemplars, even if their prognosis for my academic future (and those of others similarly situated) was/is somewhat bleak.[3] They provided me with an advance map of the terrain I would encounter as I negotiated the two poles of interesting, meaningful, critical work and work that a university might find "useful." Ben wrote me letters of recommendation for dissertation fellowships and post-docs that I never received. But his short bursts of encouragement – "Your project sounds fascinating" – motivated me to continue. Ben's work on the decline of discourse, the transformative changes to the public sphere and capitalism wrought by new technology and new media, and the role that academia itself played in deforming critical scholarship into measurable "journal science" or garbled non sequiturs that begged for the Sokal hoax all encouraged me to think clearly not only about the possibility for critical politics today but also about how I myself might contribute to or detract from that possibility through my scholarship.[4] Ben may not have anticipated the commodification of "fake news" and its impact on a national election, or a "public sphere" in which the President retweets a sixteen year old's criticism of CNN as support for his claim of voter fraud. However, his concept of literary political economy and his analysis of the decline of discourse provide strong insights into where we have arrived and how we got here. When I completed my book, a study of political criticism in journals over time, Ben eagerly accepted my request to write a blurb.[5] I owe many of the book's insights to him. It was a great honor when Ben asked me to join the editorial board of Fast Capitalism just a year and a half ago. I very much regret that I never had the opportunity to meet him or give him my sincere thanks for the role he played in my development as a scholar. Ben's work helped orient me, while his personal encouragement and support assisted me in making the transition from graduate student to colleague. He will be missed.

Endnotes

1. Elisabeth Chaves, "The War between n+1 and The Elegant Variation, Or When Production Overlooks Consumption in the Literary Political Economy," Fast Capitalism 4.1, available at <http://www.fastcapitalism. com/>.

2. Ben Agger, "Critical Theory, Poststructuralism, Postmodernism: Their Sociological Relevance," Annual Review of Sociology 17 (1991): 105-131.

3. See, for example, Ben Agger and Tim Luke, "Politics

in Postmodernity: The Diaspora of Politics and the Homelessness of Political and Social Theory," Research in Political Sociology 11 (2002): 159-195.

4. See, Ben Agger, The Decline of Discourse: Reading, Writing and Resistance in Postmodern Capitalism (London/Philadelphia: The Falmer Press, 1990); "Theorizing the Decline of Discourse of the Decline of Theoretical Discourse?" in Critical Theory Now, Phillip Wexler (ed.) (London/Philadelphia: The Falmer Press, 1991), 118-144; A Critical Theory of Public Life: Knowledge, Discourse and Politics in the Age of Decline (London/Philadelphia: The Falmer Press, 1991); Public Sociology: From Social Facts to Literary Acts (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000); "Are Authors Authored? Cultural Politics and Literary Agency in the Age of the Internet," Democracy and Nature 7:1 (2001): 183-203; The Virtual Self: A Contemporary Sociology (Boston: Blackwell, 2004); Speeding Up Fast Capitalism: Cultures Jobs, Families, Schools, Bodies (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2004); "Political Sentences: Anti-Intellectualism, Obscurantism and Polymorphous Perversity," Sociological Inquiry 78:3 (2008): 423-430.

5. Elisabeth Chaves, Reviewing Political Criticism: Journals, Intellectuals, and the State (Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate Publishing [now Routledge], 2015).

In Memory of Ben Agger

Bob Kunovich

Although I had already been an assistant professor for three years at another university, I still had a lot to learn about navigating university and professional life when I arrived in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at UT Arlington in 2004. As a senior member of the department, a former dean, and a prolific author, Ben Agger was definitely someone that I looked up to. I trusted his opinion because of his experience, despite his disdain for professional attire [Ben frequently wore jeans and a t-shirt to work. I was told that he dressed this way even as dean, although he kept a suit in his office for special occasions. I was jealous because I could never pull this off as an assistant professor].

As a new faculty member, I had tunnel vision in trying to figure out what the expectations were for earning tenure. I found all of my new colleagues to be supportive. I am sure that any one of them would have been happy to meet with me to discuss this. Ben was unique, however, in that he initiated these types of discussions. Assistant professors didn't have to go to him to ask for his input, he sought them out. I can remember attending group lunches with Ben and the other assistant professors where we would discuss publishing norms, teaching load, and other issues important to junior faculty. In these informal settings, Ben was sensitizing us to important issues in our professional lives and providing a sense that we could work to change things for the better. In these off-campus settings, I felt free to discuss contentious issues without being guarded in my opinion and developed bonds of friendship with Ben and the other junior faculty.

Ben was also unique in that his mentorship didn't end when I earned tenure. He was willing to step in to provide guidance and advice that was targeted to where I was in my career. He introduced me to faculty from other institutions, he facilitated connections to series editors (often internationally known scholars I'd otherwise never meet), he reviewed my research record to assess my readiness for promotion to full professor, and he helped me to navigate university politics in a period of institutional change shortly after I became department chair. I didn't always like his advice or agree with his conclusions, but I respected his opinion and I usually came around to his point of view after some critical thought.

In a personal reflection about Ben as a colleague, I would be remiss not to mention that he was willing to put up a good fight, but also to accept the outcome when he didn't win the argument. One example comes quickly to mind – Ben asked to speak briefly with me on my first day as graduate advisor. He questioned the decision to admit a student on probation, fearing that probationary status would impact the student's progress in our program. He wanted me to eliminate it. I made an argument, explained my position, and stood my ground while wondering what I had gotten myself into by agreeing to serve as graduate advisor. After dropping a quick f-bomb, Ben quickly moved on without holding a grudge. He had a short memory for disagreements and was likely to pat you on the back and talk about Oregon football, fishing, or your favorite burger joint when you were done pleading your case.

As department chair, I had the responsibility of calling faculty, staff, and students to notify them of Ben's death. This was the single most difficult day of my career. It is challenging to explain how difficult it was to experience and relive the sense of shock, disbelief, and profound sadness anew with each phone call. It was immediately clear that we had lost an incredible mentor and friend, but gratifying to hear 'what can I do to help?' from so many people. Every once in a while, we are reminded to reflect on the people that have impacted us. I am happy to have had the opportunity to do that now. UTA is a lesser place without Ben, but a much better place for having had him here while we did.

Staring Out the Window: A Brief Reflection on my Friend and Mentor, Ben Agger

Joshua E. Olsberg

My initial encounter with Ben Agger was shortly before class began on the first day of the semester—he caught me staring out the window, and he called me out by name in order to make his introduction. It was my first semester as a graduate student at the University of Texas at Arlington, and I took a course from Ben entitled "Writing the Social Text." The conversation that followed our introduction at the window was a preview of things to come—Ben was a wave of intellectual energy, and even facing him squarely and listening intently I found myself overwhelmed by the force behind his words and thoughts. I have no doubt those who knew Ben well experienced that sensation during conversations with him just as I did.

I had only a very little sense in that first encounter of how significant both the course I was taking and the man teaching it would be in my intellectual development. During the course I struggled to understand how to write mindfully, creatively, and rigorously—not much was clicking for me, even though I fancied myself a decent creative writer. It was when I began to read Fast Capitalism that I came to understand why writing a social text that adequately distanced itself from the object it sought to critique was so difficult to accomplish. Ben's work spoke to me—the problem was much larger than my abilities as a writer. It was not that I was simply struggling to constitute the words and ideas in a meaningful way to accomplish the small goals of a given term paper; it was that words and ideas were struggling to exist outside of the normative order imposed by our contemporary iteration of Capitalism. Books were struggling to exist as anything more than that which reproduced the acceptable spectrum of agreement or disagreement within the purview of the system. Critical political perspectives such as Marxism, feminism, etc. were struggling to exist as more than the trappings of identity. Public intellectualism was struggling to exist as anything more than a profession bound within and by neoliberal institutions. Of course not much has changed since my initial reading, even if I have.

It was during that course and that first reading, when I first realized the scope of the problem and the political project it implied should follow, that I experienced a profound sense of frustration. I thought then: "If ideas and texts cannot extricate themselves (however temporarily) from the social structures they seek to critique, then what chance do we have of fixing the obvious iniquities our scholarly studies reveal?"

I wondered then if being a social scientist was tantamount to practicing a profession of describing, in depth and in slow motion, a train wreck that was as inevitable as entropy. I would have quit at that point if it were not for Ben. Ben was encouraging and insistent, unyielding and unflappable in his convictions that the tide would turn, and that people like us would have a lot to contribute when it did.

Ben sought and took every opportunity to buck disciplinary conventions not because it was a statement of style, but because it was a necessity. Why do we write the way we do? Why do we stand on the sidelines and fail to foresee the impending social upheavals that define our present moment? Much discussion in my discipline as of late is about the need to 'decolonize' knowledge production and quit practicing an unconsciously white (and indeed upper-middle class and masculine) Sociology. The consequences of not doing so are to risk descending further into irrelevance and to lack the ability to adequately understand the crucial anti-racist, anti-capitalist movements so visible today. Ben

was never at risk of that—he remained both a productive scholar and a true public intellectual and was able to do so specifically because he understood the risk of losing the latter in pursuit of the former. He knew the pressure on scholars to 'publish or perish' was a means of constraining intellectual labor and guaranteeing that it occur in such a way that writing books and essays would be reduced to work-for-pay and just that. He pointed out to us that dissent in texts acceptable as long as texts themselves remained ephemeral—this is the era my generation of scholars has come of age in, and if it weren't for Ben Agger, for Fast Capitalism, I'm not sure we would have a critical vocabulary available to us that adequately delineates our situation.

Fast Capitalism was a remarkable accomplishment because it simultaneously articulated why books and ideas were at risk of becoming completely irrelevant as a means of producing social critique, and modeled how they could become relevant in a new way at a time when the social conditions necessitated they do so. It was nothing short of transcendent, and the scope of its contribution is still decades away from being fully understood. For his part, Ben understood passion and resoluteness were mandatory in resisting the conservativizing tendencies that ceaselessly pursue those who try to write and think critically. In an era in which public intellectuals may be feeling trapped or discouraged about the possibilities for emancipatory action, Ben gave us a roadmap to resistance. In many ways that I believe will become more obvious to all of us as time passes, Ben Agger's ideas have contributed to eventually resolving the problems through which we collectively struggle now.

I think Ben approached me that first day because I was staring out the window. He appreciated students that were daydreamers and felt more comfortable writing poetry than literature reviews. When I recall his memory and the impact he made upon me as a teacher, I am struck by the easiness in the way he conducted himself before his students. Showing up to class drenched in sweat, setting down his tennis racket, delivering a flawless and hermetically sealed lecture on Marcuse with a smile on his face, and walking back to the court when the seminar was complete. Ben was brilliant and yet spoke plainly—traits I try hard to emulate. When my father passed away unexpectedly Ben and I had coffee. I remember he made no attempts to be philosophical about the matter, he simply put his hand on my shoulder and said, "I'm sorry Josh." That moment of human contact was profound, and Ben was wise enough to understand that not everything required the kind of exegesis he sought to provide in his work. Still, he never failed to pass along a pearl of wisdom when it was warranted. The last conversation we had via text was vintage Ben, and I sometimes read back through it on my phone. He congratulated me for completing my PhD and landing an academic job and he ended our conversation thusly: "It was all worth it. Out of struggle emerges resolution."

To Family, Friends, and Colleagues of the Late Dr. Ben Agger

Jason E. Shelton

The faculty, staff, and students who knew and had the pleasure of working with Dr. Ben Agger miss him dearly. His long and distinguished career spanned four decades during which he published more than 20 books and 30 peer-reviewed research articles. Ben left an indelible mark on the American academy. His work forged new areas of inquiry, inspired vigorous debate (in various outlets, including the American Sociological Review—the flagship journal of the American Sociological Association), and helped to galvanize a new generation of scholars. He was also a well-known public intellectual who often published op-eds and granted interviews to major media outlets.

Ben's research addressed a wide range of established and cutting-edge topics from political/social movements and the development of American capitalism, to our nation's obsession with fast food and text messaging. His perspective on these topics was informed by his deeper interest in Critical Theory. As an undergraduate student, Ben's intellectual fire was lit by writings from classical theorists such as Marx, Hegel, and Adorno. As a graduate student, he was active in various writing groups that addressed postmodernism, political economy, and cultural studies. Consequently, much of his career was devoted to challenging narrow views of "science" (e.g., those that focused exclusively on empiricism), and championing the broader role that social theory should play in improving the human condition.

Some of Ben's most preeminent research contributions include Western Marxism (1979), Fast Capitalism (1988), Cultural Studies as Critical Theory (1992), and Speeding Up Fast Capitalism (2004). Each of these books—as well as many others—were warmly received and discussed in rigorous, peer-reviewed outlets. I asked Robert J. Antonio, a leading theorist at the University of Kansas and author of Ben's obituary in Critical Sociology, to list some of Ben's most influential works. He stated that, "Some of his work enjoyed wider readership than others, but I don't think any one individual work defines his contribution. Rather, his hefty corpus of work helped sustain, enliven, and broaden the Critical Theory tradition." This endorsement is buttressed by the fact that typing "Ben Agger" in the search box on Jstor, the leading digital repository for scholarly research, produces 781 results that cover 32 pages of his articles, books reviews, and research papers that reference Ben's work. Leading scholars across various fields of study—including Norman Denzin and Charles Lemert—reviewed Ben's books in preeminent publications.

Finally, Ben's success as a researcher reaped benefits that he was able to share with other scholars. In 1999, he founded UT Arlington's Center for Theory, which hosts seminars aimed fostering dialogue between the social sciences and humanities. He also established this publication, Fast Capitalism, a peer-reviewed journal that is housed in the Center and publishes interdisciplinary works on a wide range of contemporary social issues. And above all of the aforementioned, Ben was a great person. He lived every day to its fullest with vision, integrity, passion, commitment, and kindness. I am proud to have called him my friend.

He's gone but will never be forgotten.

(Auto)biography and Social Theory: A Perspective on the Life and Work of Ben Agger (1953-2015)

Lukas Szrot

Ben Agger carved out a space for the author in a society—and in many ways, a sociology—which had, in the latter decades of the twentieth century, fought for self-recognition and professional prestige by attempting to excise the appearance and language of subjectivity. In homage to his effort, what follows is not social theory, biography, or autobiography, but all of these, and perhaps something else not readily genre-specific. For Ben Agger was also a mentor and a friend. Piecing together this tale involves time-travel of a sort—not merely the linear time travel of "looking backward," but something non-linear—I did not read Ben's works in the order that he wrote them, and when writing thoughts do not come (at least to me) in a tidy, temporally-bounded flow, and thus my own reading of his life and work reflects this unavoidable non-linearity. Additionally, Ben Agger was a multifaceted person—a husband and father, a marathon runner, a prolific writer by any standard, a member of the University of Texas at Arlington Department of Sociology and Anthropology faculty, and more. I knew Ben through his writings, the courses he taught, and the times we conversed, which were many. My recollection is an episodic series of moments, not exhaustive in biographical or theoretical accounting. What follows is a personal narrative tinged with hues of the postmodern, a smattering of his life and work from one perspective that embraces—better yet, celebrates—the messiness, ambiguities, and complexity of social interactions in lived human lives.

Ben Agger as Teacher and Mentor

Dr. Agger taught an undergraduate social theory course at the University of Texas at Arlington in 2003. At the time I was this awkward, scrawny twenty-year-old philosophy major who read Nietzsche and stomped across campus with thrash metal blaring through my headphones. I was considering a double major, and so I enrolled in it. The course was compelling and refreshing, featuring a discussion of the sociology triumvirate of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim contextualized by thinkers ranging from Plato to Descartes and Heidegger to Sartre. Dr. Agger seemed to have an encyclopedic memory, lecturing with few or no notes (he was well-known for his distaste for PowerPoint slide shows, I learned later), his lectures a nonlinear, dialectical dance which often started, touched upon, or ended with Marx or the Frankfurt School. The mid-term exam was essay format, completed in the nearby computer lab. He printed out copies of my completed essay, with my name blacked out, and distributed them to the class. "This is what social theory looks like." I was a rather arrogant young man with many harsh lessons ahead of him, but found this strangely humbling. After this, I thanked him on the way out of class, and we talked a bit—the first of many such brief conversations, in which I felt comfortable voicing my growing disenchantment with the Anglophone analytic philosophy that had come to dominate the tradition. Though it would be many years, again due to Ben's guidance, that I would come to find a voice that had capture this disenchantment in the second half of Herbert Marcuse's (1964) <u>One-Dimensional Man</u>.

I do not remember many of the details of our conversations now, but, I know we also touched on ancient philosophy, particularly the propensity of the ancient Greeks to place special emphasis on the normative concerns. Ethics in modern philosophy, if I may be excused for recounting a youthfully naïve overgeneralization, often seemed to focus on sterile conceptual hair-splitting, apparently remote from providing guidance, inspiration, or deliberation toward "the good life." The role of normative—and political—concerns as discussed by Ben in his social theory class emerged at the fore, as did their intimate connection to questions of epistemology and ontology. Some of those ideas that emerged back in 2003 during those brief chats remain foundational to my current academic interests and pursuits.

Back then I was going to be a college professor—or a professional musician—I could not decide which. After completing a bachelor's degree in 2004, and perhaps to the dismay of many, I opted for the latter route. During the interim, I lost touch with Ben, as well as the philosophy department. I learned later that my philosophy advisor passed away in 2008. It was devastating, as was the gradual realization that music, at least as I had stubbornly pursued it, afforded a generally lousy lifestyle and few opportunities for—well—stability of any sort. It was not until 2013 that I returned to academe, this time in pursuit of a graduate degree in sociology. Hesitantly, I reached out to Dr. Agger, who still, after all that time, remembered me, and was happy to write a letter of recommendation that I might enter the graduate program in his department that fall.

That summer I re-read Postponing the Postmodern, in my opinion one of Ben's best, and most underrated, books. During the final editorial stages, the September 11, 2001 World Trade Center attacks had happened, which had captured the attention of many social theorists, including Ben, who devoted an epilogue to the events. The aftermath saw bursts of lucidity and insight of the sort that seem to drive good social theory, an inherent tension and nuance that falls short of exhaustion or ambivalence, that such events provoked. Social theory at times seems to operate best when perched dramatically between hope and fear, between utopia and dystopia, and the aftermath of the 9.11 attacks marked this notably. Agger (2002) argued in the afterword, with Habermas, that modernity remains incomplete because many of the world's people do not yet enjoy wealth, or even have enough to survive, and political democracy is hardly found everywhere. Yet there are two more telling, classic "Agger-esque" passages, first: "And even where it [democracy] is found, there is real concern that democracy is simply a smoke screen for the interests of capital, an 'executive committee of the bourgeoisie,' as Marx termed the state" (201). This epitomizes Ben in many ways: courageous, undogmatic, and matter-of-fact. His writing at its best reflects his speech, and teaching, at once polished and down-to-earth, inviting additional thought and deliberation. I wonder today whether it is accurate or analytically useful to label the state as such, or whether extant liberal democracies are really window-dressings for something more insidious. Yet this quote, at once forceful and controversial, neither dogmatically avers nor licenses obsequiousness.

The ideas expressed in a second quotation, however, run deeper, and seem to have haunted much of Agger's scholarly career: "And even where secular science prevails, scientism (a belief that science will solve all social problems) and positivism function ideologically, as belief systems that cloak the status quo in permanence and ontological necessity" (ibid.). In his graduate social theory course that fall, I often heard him use the phrase "stand outside the world," a description of the apparent effort to write, and do, sociology, as if one occupied a "view from nowhere," a sort of Archimedian point of reference without a point of reference. It was not science, but the monster of **scientism**, usually termed **positivism**, with whom Ben did battle. In Postponing the Postmodern, he declares that "A sociology without any numeracy whatsoever, from census data to fertility rates, from average income data to crime statistics, would be as impoverished as a sociology that denies that authorial voice, and with it theory and qualitative method" (ibid. 9). I did not realize that there was something that could be read rather triumphantly in his proclamation here until years later. He was also fond of a phrase—"science **is** fiction"—which made me squirm in my seat. Growing up on a steady diet of popular science books and Carl Sagan, noting how fragile was the "candle in the dark" that illuminated the wonders of the distant past, and could unlock the vast and ancient universe, the atomic and subatomic world, and life itself, I was taken aback. I spent a great deal of time during my first year as a graduate student studying the creation-evolution controversy in American education—if science was fiction, did that mean Intelligent Design, Young Earth Creationism…Flat Earth theory…had a place in public school science classrooms after all? The difference between science and fiction seemed clear to me—and it **matters what's true. How could science be fiction? I wondered**.

I was working full-time at my father's machine shop that fall, newly-married and with no car and little money or credit, taking six credit hours without funding by living in relative austerity and with help from family and friends (as so many of us do). When I did get a car later that semester, a 1980-something Mercedes that my dad and some of

the guys down at the shop overhauled (which I affectionately called the "Frankenbenz"), arriving on campus in the late afternoon frequently meant parking far from class, and Ben often drove me, as well as any other students who wanted a ride, to our cars in an old red van which issued an intermittent clunking sound near the passenger-side front axle. Years of working with machines led me to inquire. Ben noted it, and asked me what it was—I diagnosed a bad ball joint. That van must have had over 300,000 miles on it, not what one would expect of a full professor and author of over a dozen books. On one such drive, we discussed Max Weber, particularly the idea that scientific knowledge had led to an increased disenchantment of the world, the topic that would become my first graduate theory term paper, and the springboard for a Master's thesis. On another journey to the distant parking lot, he asked me how the first semester as a grad student was going. I replied, with some hesitation: "I am really enjoying the material, and my courses, but I am left wondering…what exactly sociology **is**."

Ben replied with a grin: "When you figure it out, let me know." I was fascinated by religion as well as social theory, and had also developed a love for statistics. He unabashedly encouraged the intellectual growth of his students, wherever it should take them. In an existentialist, almost Sartrean sense, he spoke of the centrality of one's effort to "find your truth"—the worst sin was not leaving academe for the private sector or failing to attain—or even pursue—a tenure-track academic job, but failing yourself by living in bad faith. Ben Agger discussed Russell Jacoby's The Last Intellectuals near the end of that semester, which piqued my interest though it would be years before I sat down to read it. An opportunity to bring together the critical theory of the course and my interest in religion presented itself in the form of a class presentation. I was eager to impress him, and to prove I was capable of graduate study, and offered to discuss Marcuse and Weber—rationalization and disenchantment alongside one-dimensional thought.

I wrestled with the connection between morality and rationality, questioning some of the more radical tenets of Marxism and wondering aloud how the blame for the Holocaust indeed belonged at the feet of the Enlightenment (it would be some time before I read the rather gloomy Dialectic of Enlightenment). It came into sharp relief by the end of Ben's course that the move toward postmodernity, for some, brings new challenges, perhaps including a form of historical amnesia: "Modernism, or so it is imagined, was old enough to remember a time when there were firm foundations to human existence, and was still reeling from the shock of their being kicked rudely away" (Eagleton 2003:57), while "Postmodernism is too young to remember a time when there was (so it was rumored) truth, identity and reality, and so feels no dizzying abyss beneath its feet" (ibid. 58). At times I feel like a modern person living in a postmodern world.

For Ben, "Selfhood today is experienced primarily as anxiety, even desperation. The anxiety concerns what Max Weber has called the loss of meaning, which seems to many to be an inevitable byproduct of modernity, including capitalism. The loss of meaning is occasioned by a peculiarly ahistorical view of the world, which is flattened into an eternal present. The world we experience appears to exhaust all possible worlds. We don't know who we are, or what formed us" (Agger 2002:3). As one who grew up Catholic, studied philosophy, pursued music, and was rewarded with a sensation akin to skydiving without a ground toward which to travel—or a parachute—these ideas spoke volumes. Maybe there is a way to medicalize this sensation—by calling it "anxiety" perhaps—as a gesture toward bringing it under expert control. I could be "normalized," statistically and psychically, as Stivers (1999) might put it in his provocative Technology as Magic, "treated" for a disease—I could belong to a statistically-created social category (102); I could trade existential unease as a quality of the modern condition for a reduction of my standard error in relation to a regression line.

During the time I knew Ben, I thought myself "religiously unmusical," to borrow Weber's (Gerth and Mills 1946:25) famous euphemism, identifying as an atheist, though I increasingly came to wonder what it even means to be "religious." After Nietzsche, the very definition of what it means to be religious slides toward undecidability. Max Horkheimer once called religion "The not-yet-strangled impulse that insists that reality should be otherwise, that the spell will be broken and turn toward the right direction" (Quoted in Neiman 2003:306). If this is religion, is critical theory, in some important sense, a **religious** project? I no longer use the word "atheist." I hear music now, to extend Weber's metaphor. It is beautiful, indeed. But is it "the" music? It does not seem to emanate exclusively from any one of the world's religious traditions, and I find the term "spiritual" irksome and hopelessly amorphous.

A verbose and angst-laden e-mail containing some of the above arrived on Dr. Agger's desk at some point in early 2014, and he began his reply with the phrase, "please, call me Ben." He encouraged his students to do so, having a dislike for hierarchy and formality, but many admittedly were intimidated by his erudition (myself included for some time after this), and still referred to him title-first. By some stroke of happenstance, I was able to reapply for funding that December, and received a full fellowship beginning that January. I said a bittersweet good-bye to

my father's machine shop, and to many of the great men and women with whom I had worked, both there and as a struggling local musician. That second semester, Ben taught a course called "Fast Food and Fast Bodies in Fast Capitalism," delving into the body as a site most affected by the speed-ups of capitalism, the high costs of fast food, and the inspiring efforts put in by marathon runners. It was revealing—Ben was a regular runner, and had completed several marathons, being at the time in his early sixties. He was an avowed ethical vegan, exposing students to the cruelties of the factory farming system that produced the vast majority of our meat products (something I was exposed to at a relatively early age during a part-time job at a chicken slaughterhouse), and an admitted coffee addict (not an especially unusual vice in academia so far as I can tell, and one to which I am no exception). I tried running a few 5Ks that year, but I am a little overweight (so says the Body Mass Index chart anyway), and have a bad lower back; it became clear after a few attempts that walking and hiking are more my speed.

There was a lot of writing, journaling, and feedback during that course (Ben was resistant to exams and grading as vestiges of the positivism he deplored), which enjoyed a broad interdisciplinary popularity. For the term paper assignment, I wrote a critical theory piece on alcohol with Ben's approval (he called alcohol "the elephant in the room," something we did not much discuss as a class), exploring the cultural and ideological bases of the diseasing of behaviors as Peele (1989) critically called them in <u>Diseasing of America</u>. In <u>Diseases of the Will</u>, Marianne Valverde (1998) paraphrased American physician Benjamin Rush, whose silhouette graces the logo of the American Psychiatric Association, and who was one of the signers of the U.S. Constitution. In the 1780s he argued that habitual drunkenness should be regarded not as a bad habit but as a disease, a "palsy of the will" (quoted on 2). Questions of will, and agency, are raised anew when behavior becomes medicalized.

At the end of that semester, I had to choose a thesis advisor, and I asked Ben if he would be willing to work with me. I had talked to a few other professors about the logistics of academia, and their expectations, becoming ever more aware of the stakes. Ben was willing to work with me, and after our talk I was convinced that theory would best suit my academic goals and temperament. He noted the emphasis on method and technical know-how in many of the sociology departments in the United States, as well as the expectation that one would work on "research teams" or co-publish with faculty or peers. "You strike me as a lonely scholar," he noted. In <u>Public Sociology</u>, Ben announces: "An epistemological pluralist, I am intolerant only of intolerance! That is, the positivist program as I understand it necessarily excludes non-positivist ways of knowing and writing" (Agger 2000:231). When I asked him about my Master's Thesis, he was emphatically uninterested in chairing a "scientific method" sociology project (a data-driven quantitative project which tested hypotheses and was written in conformity with journal article norms), though he was interested in, and knowledgeable about, science generally. I too am what he would call an epistemological pluralist—science, for me, simply suggests a systematic way of understanding the world. It was not the brainchild of seventeenth-century white men, but the outcome of the central survival skills of the human species since prehistory. And sociology is stronger, I contend, not weaker, for its breadth of epistemic and methodological work.

(Re)reading (Social) Science: Ben Agger's Critique of Sociology and the Academy

Around that time Ben put me in touch with the independent American philosophy and critical theory journal <u>Telos</u>, where I eventually became an intern and to whom I still proudly contribute writings and conference presentations today. These factors led to many early morning meetings over coffee at Starbucks and a conference course in the sociology of knowledge the following semester, during which Ben introduced me to the pioneering efforts of Karl Mannheim in <u>Ideology and Utopia</u>,(1936). That moment was preceded by a series of forays into the philosophy of social science, particularly the fierce critiques of Marx via Karl Popper in <u>The Open Society and Its Enemies</u> (1962) and the work of philosopher Robert D'Amico (1991) on "Popper, Adorno, and the Methodology Dispute." The first piece of my work ever to be published was a short *Telos* thread on the relationship between critical theory, utopia, and revolution via Adorno, on the one hand, and piecemeal reform and fallibilism via Popper on the other (Szrot 2014). While I still think Popper was more than a little unfair to Hegel, as well as Mannheim, his critiques of Plato and Marx—nuanced, complex, and insightful—still challenge me today.

Ben had clearly read these works, and was comfortable discussing them over coffee. But the "elephant in the room" that fall was my thesis proposal, and the journey toward enrolling in a Ph.D. program at the end of the semester (UT Arlington did not offer a doctoral program in sociology). We also talked about the best restaurants in Arlington, the academic job market, a shared love of '60s and '70s rock music…he was at once serious and

personable. Ben taught a sociology of the 1960s course in the mornings, and he had to find a substitute one day. I jumped at the chance. He introduced me to his class as "an advanced graduate student, and my friend." The class and I watched performances by Jimi Hendrix, the Doors, Jefferson Airplane, and others. For Ben, sociology, writing, cultural studies—were all part of an inherently personal political project. He unabashedly stood with Marx on his eleventh thesis on Feuerbach: "heretofore the philosophers have tried to understand the world. The point, however, is to change it." I have yet to come across a work by Ben that does not make some reference to this as a foundational guiding principle in his work. Coming of age in a tumultuous era, and participating himself in youth activism, Ben spoke of the 1960s as an insider, as a member of the "New Left," and did not attempt to conceal his political perspective.

When teaching my own politically heterogeneous, principally non-majors social problems course for the first time in Fall 2016 at the University of Kansas, Agger's (2009) book The Sixties at 40 was required reading—the issues of racism, poverty and stratification, gender inequity, educational inequality, and institutional discrimination, to name just a few issues that have drawn a sociological gaze, had their roots in the 60s, as did our socially-constructed definitions of them as social problems. In doing so I hope to resist the subordination of the moral dimension of social problems to the technical—as Stivers (1999) puts it, "the dominant metaphor of evil becomes 'social problem.' To use **problem** as a metaphor is to invoke mathematics and engineering. A problem is an obstacle, something to be solved or overcome. Social problems are not moral problems, but technical problems" (27, emphasis in original).

Yet I have many questions I never got to ask Ben. He was in some of his earlier works quite critical of what he called positivist social science—in Reading Science, which I also read that year, he critiqued its propensity for writing the author out of journal articles increasingly laden with statistical tables, charts, and graphs. "I have read journal science as a literary and hence political expression," Ben writes. "Facts are not simply facts; science writers, in reporting the world, also constitute it…Methodology solves no intellectual problems. It is rhetoric. As rhetoric, it can be engaged, opposed, even reformulated" (Agger 1989:210). Even "journal theory" or "empiricized theory" as he read it was often dense and obtuse pieces dealing with seemingly miniscule problems of interpretation from Talcott Parsons or some other theorist (179-209)—"Sometimes what appears to be theory, lacking data, vitiates its theoreticity shamelessly. Theory construction differs from interpretive theory in the baldness of its methodological programmatism. No punches are pulled; research is in the saddle" (203).

This is **sociological theory**, not social theory, and Ben's critique, as I read it, is that "journal theory" is theory, de-clawed and domesticated, rendered unable to have a transformative effect on the social world. Changing the world was not just part of the goal of sociology for Ben—it was the goal. Perhaps the difficulty of social theory, however, is a problem about which both Ben Agger and analytic philosophy have something to say, which I recently stumbled upon anew while re-reading Hillary Putnam's (1995) The Many Faces of Realism: Putnam examines the notion of "reasonableness" in the context of both ethics and science, rejecting the Weberian-Kantian move to dichotomize fact and value (64; 78), and eschewing efforts to turn the question "why **should** I?" into a "**means-end** kind of problem," which ultimately leads Putnam to conclude:

> The fact is that we have an **underived**, a **primitive** obligation of some kind to be reasonable, not a 'moral obligation' or an 'ethical obligation,' to be sure...I **also** believe that it will work better in the long run for people to be reasonable, certainly; but when the question is **Why do you expect that**, **in this** unrepeatable **case** (Peirce's puzzle 78-83), **what is extremely likely to happen will happen?**, here I have to say with Wittgenstein: 'This is where my spade is turned. This is what I do, this is what I say'...This is where my justifications and explanations stop **now**...our moral images are in a process of development and reform (84-5).

I think Putnam's move has (dis)solved an important problem (though it does not alleviate the aforementioned modernist vertigo): replace "reasonable" with another ethically- or politically-freighted term, and one eventually, once more, reaches bedrock. Of course, once it's "turtles all the way down," even in some temporary, and possibly culturally-embedded sense, one can then begin doing empirical (but not necessarily positivist) sociology, examining who values reasonableness, why do some people rely on reasonableness more than others, and the like. Agger's move from "social facts to literary acts" resonates with this in an interesting sense, as Agger argues:

> One does not need a particular version of left-wing politics—mine, for example—to agree that sociology needs to be written differently, telling a public story...stories are not equally true or good, but they cannot be resolved with reference to knowledge outside of argument itself. Although I contend that we can create a classless society, I cannot demonstrate this conclusively to people who would tell a different, perhaps Platonist or Weberian, story. My story, however well told, involves a certain circularity—my definition of social class, my theory of inequality, my conception of the good—that begs questions

that cannot be answered without inviting further circularity (Agger 2000:256-7).

I read Agger to be suggesting that his "spade is turned" in a similar regard. Putnam knew, as many social theorists who have appended (or had appended by others) the moniker "postmodern" or "critical theory" to their work have sensed, that "the line of thinking that said, 'Well if science has smashed all that [the foundations of knowledge, religion, politics, and morality], well and good. Science will give us better in its place,' now looks tired," (Putnam 1995:29); after Nietzsche, we must "philosophize without foundations" (ibid.). This does not mean there **is not** a world which science is aiding in understanding, but Nietzsche seemed to understand this, as did Weber: "after Nietzsche one could no longer look to science to free us from political decisions or give meaning to life" (Antonio 2015). Some of our most urgent questions as social beings raise new ontological and epistemic complexities in a post-foundational world.

In Socio(onto)logy, Agger (1989) critiqued sociology textbooks via content analysis, particularly the means by which the radical political projects of feminism and Marxism were co-opted and de-fanged as "conflict theory," "straight feminism," and the like, arguing that "The marginalia of radical dissent are **disqualified**; radicalism is modulated by liberal reasonableness suggesting the inevitability of some degree of hierarchy, inequality, and heterosexist family" (137, emphasis in original). Ben's critique of the practice of professional academic sociology is related to his concern for the university as a site of political activism, or perhaps more notably, lack thereof, reserving his most trenchant critiques for "many older faculty during the late 1950s and early 1960s (and even today) [who] were merely bureaucratically organized civil servants who punched in and out, refrained from rocking the boat, and published modestly on narrow topics that padded their vitae but did not change the prevailing paradigms" (Agger 2009:149) and arguing that, "The war in Vietnam gave U.S. academics few alternatives to taking sides. Faculty either helped their students avoid the draft by maintaining grade-point averages sufficiently high to retain their student deferments, or refused to do so. Faculty either marched or supported the war. They either wore a peace button or plastered an American flag on their car window. There was no middle ground" (ibid:152). I count myself fortunate to have thus far largely avoided such dilemmas—if I opposed the war, was it then my moral duty to inflate grades, or did this fatally conflict with my responsibilities as an educator? Can one love one's country—and one's institution— while also protesting, or rejecting, its policies? And if there is a "fatal conflict" in responsibilities as protestor and as educator, to quote the old unionist folk tune: "which side are you on"?

It was not just "the right" at which Ben took aim, but perhaps in some ways, more directly, "the center," including some of his sociologist colleagues who may have voted Democrat and agreed with Ben on many issues, yet who "are politically progressive but intellectually conservative. They respect the right of people to be gay, but hate postmodernism…Derrida has queered the western philosophical tradition by challenging foundational hierarchies, of production over reproduction, subject over object, reading over writing, straight over gay and so on" (Agger 2008:188). I do not know enough about either Derrida or queer theory to evaluate the specifics here, but this seemed part of a broader missive for sociology, and for the university. This perspective, this challenge to get "off the bench and into the game," to draw upon a sports metaphor (which Ben would have appreciated) would mean the transformation of sociology, and the university, into an expressly political site. Ben did not mince words on this: "For mainstream sociology to adopt, and thus adapt to, these three theoretical perspectives [critical theory, postmodernism, and poststructuralism] would substantially change the nature of the discipline…resist[ing] their integration into a highly differentiated, hierarchized, technical discipline that defines itself largely with reference to the original sociologies of Comte, Durkheim, and Weber, who established the positivist study of social facts and separated the vocations of science and politics" (Agger 1991:125).

This tension manifested itself in 1994, with an exchange between Fuchs and Ward, on one hand, and Agger on the other, in the prestigious disciplinary journal organ American Sociological Review. Agger (1994) takes on Fuchs and Ward's claim that in eras of Kuhnian paradigm shift, "radical" deconstruction takes over, and even basic assumptions are called into question. However, "moderate deconstruction takes over when a field organizes itself around certain assumptions that are exempt from deconstruction so that practical work can go forward" (501), arguing that "'Moderate' deconstruction is not deconstruction because it embodies 'foundationalism'…Fuchs and Ward have got deconstruction wrong. Most important, they have Derrida wrong. They fail to read him as a social theorist, indeed as a left and feminist one" (501). Agger saw deconstructionism as fundamentally a radical political project which denied foundations, and lambasts the relativist and nihilist readings of deconstruction as method: "Far from being a nihilist, Derrida wants to reveal the hidden assumptions of systems in order to open public dialogue about them" (503). Fuchs and Ward (1994) reply to Agger's reply by claiming that "he has nothing at all to say about

the substance of our argument" (506), and spending the rest of the article expounding upon disciplinary hierarchy and institutionalization: What Ben saw might have recognized as emancipatory, deliberative, iconoclastic, and value-laden sociology, Fuchs and Ward characterize as an "initial stage of youthful frivolity and playfulness" (507) that is simply a "liability of newness" (508). That is, viewing an academic field of study as born of this playfulness and excitement, "If they continue at all beyond this initial stage…They turn more and more inward, demarcating themselves from nonmembers and other specialties. After a while, celebrated intellectual and organizational leaders emerge and make authoritative pronouncements of doctrine. These leaders become the official spokespersons of the organization. They represent its agenda to an environment that would otherwise, without such spokespersons, not even register that something was going on" (507).

I get the feeling they are talking past each other. There are Weberian overtones to Fuchs and Ward's argument which bring to mind "Politics as a Vocation," (1946) stressing as it does something akin to a transition from charismatic authority in radical deconstruction to the required if not inevitable rationalization and routinization of a field's newness. The assumption that organizations arise in this way, whether it is a noted tendency or iron law, "tells a Weberian story," to note Agger's words on a classless society—namely, a Weberian story, broadly written, presumes that politics means a hierarchical distribution of power as well as intellectual and vocational specialization. Thus, radical deconstruction cannot remain radical and must become moderate—"Revolutions cannot become permanent…the previous critical opposition settles down as the new establishment" (Fuchs and Ward 1994:510). Critical theory as Ben Agger practiced it would reject this out of hand, as a means of legitimating the status quo (in this case, regarding the evolution of academic fields) by making it appear natural, rational, inevitable. There does, to deconstruct the deconstructionists, if I might, seem to be a clear political tension here, a political tension between the radical and utopian vision of a classless society and the Weberian vision of modernity as complexity, efficiency, bureaucracy, hierarchy. Fuchs and Ward are making an argument as to what is; Agger, to what **ought** to be, as he sees it. I see the same tension manifesting itself once again, between a piecemeal reformer like Popper who calls for working for policy change within existing institutions and the radical utopian vision of a wholly new, and truly free, world.

Indeed, Agger (2000) called for a "public sociology" in his work by that name: "sociology 'is public if it embraces Marx's eleventh thesis on Feuerbach, which merges theory and practice…[and] **must want to change the world**, and it must recognize that it is already changing the world by intervening in it. Finally, a public sociology addresses itself to various publics, to which it doesn't condescend but seeks to **mobilize**" (quoted in Land 2008:507, emphasis mine). It was not sociology as a profession, as an institution, to which he paid homage, but the ideals which drove this broader intellectual project. Between 2000 and 2008, the American Sociological Association had begun taking the idea of public sociology seriously, releasing an anthology of fifteen essays devoted to the question (Clawson et. al 2007). Agger criticized these efforts by the ASA, considering in the second edition that he "should have suspected that 'public sociology' would become a brand, a convenient slogan or a label endorsed by mainstream sociologists!'" (ibid.) During this particular episode, Agger (2008) struck forcefully, opening a journal article with: "Jacques Derrida…made many mad: analytical philosophers, positivists in the science and social sciences, the right, stupid people generally" (187). He noted how "[a] colleague of mine at a former university dismissed Derridean sociology as 'speculative bullshit,' which is a lot like calling it gibberish. I thought he meant that he did not understand Derrida and thus was mad at him…" (192-3). The brunt of his critique (attack?) was the recipient of the recent ASA award for public sociology, Pepper Schwartz (2008), for her book entitled <u>Prime: Adventures and Advice on Sex, Love, and the Sensual Years</u>. Schwartz consulted for an on-line matchmaking site, and also for "Playboy Online"—Agger lambasts her work **pubic**, not public, sociology, arguing: "You have to be really self-absorbed to write a book about your sexual experiences or perhaps just needy. If Schwartz's pubic sociology cannot change the world, at least it can get you laid" (194). Later he quotes Sartre's letter to the Nobel Prize committee at length, as to why he could not accept the award, and states emphatically: "It is an iron law that you cannot be a public sociologist and rake in the cash by commodifying your work" (197).

I wish I could have talked to Ben about this article in particular. Is this irritation that his idea of public sociology has been coopted, distorted, **commodified** by mainstream sociology? I wonder aloud: if social science is unavoidably political, in teaching, method, research, and practice, and the body is political as well, is there not something political about Schwartz's work as well? If "the personal is political," is there not something transformative about her revealing tales? Having stood in front of a class of undergraduates and uncomfortably lectured on the sociology sex and sexuality more than once, I am convinced there is something courageous about discussing sex openly, without shame, particularly if one is not male and heterosexual, and it is a courage I largely do not possess. I have not read

Schwartz's book, and ultimately, due to my own busy schedule or prudishness, may never. I wish I knew more about what led to this particular event. I wish Ben and I could talk about it.

This is the End, the Abrupt and Unexpected End

Ben was a Derridean feminist Marxist. I think he would like to be remembered as such. I am not a Derridean, but have gleaned insights from Ben, and others, via critical theory (sociology of knowledge, media, culture), postmodernism (religion and public reason, civil society), and poststructuralism (international relations theory, peace and conflict research), that remain an important part of my endeavors. I consider myself a feminist. But Marxism, in a Derrida's (1994) Specters of Marx sense, haunts me, as it haunts sociology, American culture, every contraction in the global economy. It would be in bad faith if I did not admit that I have serious doubts about the possibility of a classless utopia, or that I did not tend toward Weber's admittedly pessimistic formulations of industrial capitalist modernity and bureaucratic domination.

By the winter of 2014 I had arrived at a crucial point: it was a time to decide whether, and how, to pursue a Ph.D. in sociology. Ben had helped me select schools amenable to my interests, and he encouraged me on the long and odious journey toward re-taking the Graduate Record Exam (my previous scores had expired shortly after being admitted into the UTA Master's program). I applied to nine schools, was rejected by four, wait-listed and later rejected by one, and accepted by four. I defended a proposal, and then wrote an ambitious (perhaps over-ambitious, in retrospect), Master's Thesis entitled The Idols of Modernity: The Humanity of Science and the Science of Humanity. Where Ben read, and re-read, Marcuse's (1966) Eros and Civilization I was in part inspired by Nietzsche's The Gay Science to examine the possibility of science as a fundamentally human, value-embedded, "playful" project rather than the chilly logico-mathematical edifice which perhaps no practicing scientist really believes it to be. It was a long, strange journey, and Ben, I think, was instrumental convincing the other members of my committee that I would be able to accomplish the task to which I endeavored. There was Dr. Heather Jacobson, an esteemed qualitative researcher, and the department graduate advisor, for whom I had served as a teaching assistant, and Ben's spouse, Dr. Beth Anne Shelton, an empiricist who had published influential work in gender and the family. None of this, from the day I set foot in the sociology department again in 2013, would have been possible without them.

I served as a teaching assistant for Dr. Shelton that spring, and, upon informing her of the schools to which I had been accepted, she told me: "Go to Kansas." I sat in on Ben's writing class that semester, where I met some great people and learned more about writing, including that most people, to varying degrees, even those who did it for a living, on some level hated doing it, or at least found it exhausting and frustrating. The last time I spoke to Ben was on the last class meeting of that writing seminar: he told me he had begun using "multiple guess" tests in his "Sociology of the 1960s" course, and that he was less than pleased with the result. Teaching, for Ben, was always a participatory effort—he did not really have "required" readings, saying "read around in it—sample it, get as far as you can" when pressed to clarify his reading expectations. Of course, graduate students read books without being prompted—those who like to read, it seems, are more likely to pursue this line of work in the first place!

Ben presided over the UTA center for theory, and I attended every colloquium I could, especially that spring. I heard talks on topics from Heidegger to ocean acidification, attended largely by denizens of the English department. I wonder if Ben would have felt freer, less alienated, in an English department. In any event, he contributed a great deal to sociology as theory and practice. Returning to my comment on Postponing the Postmodern, I can't help but think that Ben's vision for sociology, and the academy has indeed impacted its direction: from where I stand, scholarship seems to be more cross-disciplinary, positivism has largely fallen out of favor, and sociology has become more epistemically diverse and politically engaged. Though I pick up my ASA and regional periodicals each quarter and find a great deal of charts, tables, numbers, and figures, I also find more qualitative research, more theory, that I would have expected if the disciplinary hegemony Ben perceived, and railed against, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, was still the norm.

I had no inkling that I would be among Ben's last students. It is difficult to be referred to as such. Given his lifestyle habits—vegan runner—and mine—regular consumer of fried chicken, pizza, and craft beer—even though I am thirty years his junior, I thought he would probably outlive me. It was in the evening, mid-July. I had gone back to work at my dad's machine shop—summers were always busy, and having a full-time job for three months helped off-set the pay cut that came with becoming a graduate teaching assistant. Dr. Jacobson called me and informed me

of his passing after a brief illness. He was just 62 years old. I was going to see if he would be willing to meet with me, at the usual Starbucks, sometime before 8am the following week to chat before I left. I never got to thank him, or say good-bye.

Friends and colleagues called me that evening to invite me to an impromptu get-together, having just learned of Ben's passing, as well. I politely declined. Some crave companionship at times like that. I prefer a solitary walk in the park. I went on a really long walk that day.

We study what we study in part because of who we are as individuals. The unique life experiences we share over the course of a lifetime shape who we become, and what we study. When I hear myself saying: "You cannot stand outside the social world and view it from nowhere," I know such ideas came from Ben's work and life. Teaching my own "Social Problems and American Values" course, I assign his book *The Sixties at 40*—in an age of Occupy Wall Street, Black Lives Matter, the Obergefell Supreme Court ruling in 2015, and as of November, a political apparatus once more dominated by the Right, such a work is essential for contextualizing the origin of today's most stubborn American social problems and burgeoning cultural battles. The 1960s were instrumental in Ben Agger's growth as a scholar and as a human being. My parents are his age. For me, one of the formative moments was the September 11 attacks in 2001. Today's undergraduate students were toddlers when September 11 occurred, and the 1960s probably seem like a remote period in history.

Dr. Antonio has been instrumental in helping me adjust to life in Lawrence, Kansas, in many ways exhibiting the personal kindness combined with unflinching honesty and academic rigor Ben Agger possessed. He is currently my advisor, and I am in the early stages of my dissertation proposal, researching the normative and religious dimensions of ecological stewardship. As one who is conflicted on matters of religion, I do not know what happens after death. Some believe in reincarnation, or heaven or hell, or oblivion. I hope instead to live a life that honors the memory of those who have had a profound influence along the way. Regarding Ben, that means seeing to it that I live in good faith, pursuing sociology, authoring social theory, sticking to convictions, and in general, striving to be the kind of person in whom those I have lost would take pride should they be watching.

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Between the Topoi and Hope: On Ben Agger, Social Ontology, and Disciplinary Sociology

Mark P. Worrell

As a graduate student in the early 90s I spent many days rummaging through the library at the University of Kansas trying to get a handle on the world of Critical Social Theory. One author I repeatedly encountered was Ben Agger. I asked Bob Antonio about "this Ben Agger guy" who seemed to me to be doing pretty interesting work, and a lot of it, too. As my imaginary map of critical theory developed over time, Ben Agger was one of the "big time" figures who populated that constellation; and he always remained, for me, one of the "big time" theorists. Years later, after I had landed a tenure track job at SUNY Cortland, I submitted a paper on 'The Other Frankfurt School' to a session organized by Ben at the annual ASA meeting. I hoped for little more than a polite rejection but, surprisingly, not only was my paper accepted but it eventually became my entrée into the journal Fast Capitalism. Wow, I thought, somebody up there likes me. Over the years, about a half dozen of my articles were published in Fast Capitalism with Ben and Tim Luke at the helm and I ended up writing a couple of small books for Ben's Routledge series. The last book is notable because it was, basically, the one that marked his departure as editor from his own series and the way he left it says a lot about the generosity, loyalty and heterodox nature of Ben Agger's vision of intellectual community.

My little book on terrorism was a broad and critical examination of American foreign and domestic policy centered around terror as a kind of 'bow wave' generated by imperial motion. I liked the book, Ben was pleased, one reviewer thought it was just peachy, but another, one of those stuffed-shirt positivistic law and order types that the editor at Routledge selected to review the manuscript, was "horrified" and it looked like the book would be trashed on the basis of that single reaction. Ben fought intensely to get that book into print, and I gather the fight was somewhat brutal. Ultimately, Ben prevailed and as soon as Routledge capitulated, he resigned from his own series. He sent me two messages that day: your book will be published, and, about a minute later he sent another that said, by the way, I just resigned as editor. Obviously, I felt terrible over 'killing the series' — though it persists today under new editorship. I felt doubly bad because I know that while Ben might not literally wince in pain while reading my work, he could not have agreed with a lot of what I had to say. Indeed, I suspect that he viewed my whole theoretical project, synthesizing Marx with Durkheimian sociology with a degree of consternation — probably a **great deal** of consternation. My work toward a 'Marxheimian Sociology' could only look like a fool's errand to the vast and overwhelming majority of folks in the Critical Social Theory business, yet, that was Ben in a nutshell: supportive, generous and open-minded. His lack of dogmatism as well as his organizing energy made all the difference in my professional life and many scholars can say the same thing about the impact that Ben had on their careers and how he shaped their thinking. Ben Agger, in short, cultivated intellectual freedom, open-mindedness, and provided a space for a diverse group of scholars to stretch out and see what they could accomplish. And while many of us who circulate in and around Fast Capitalism will accomplish much in their scholarly lives, few will accomplish as much as Ben Agger did.

Ben's scholarly record is, by any measure, astonishing but what separates him from most other prolific writers was his knack for being years ahead of everybody else. For example, social ontology is all the rage at the moment, yet, at a time when virtually nobody had the foresight to tackle the problem, Ben was all over it. His 1989 book,

Socio(onto)logy really stands out as one of the few really good books on the problem of social ontology and task of critical theory to demystify social facts. Not surprisingly, Durkheim came in for some severe criticism.

> Evoking and thus provoking domination, sociology repeats Durkheim's dreary ontology; 'social facts' turn history into ontology. Freedom is equivalent to obedience; laws govern the advance of hierarchy, patriarchy, capital. Following Durkheim, sociology freezes powerless subjectivity into ontology, thus freezing it politically (1989: 6).

From this angle the Durkheimian program amounts to little more than a dogmatic narrowing of the discipline (1989: 71-102), submission to fate, and the valorization of obedience. Now, Ben is undeniably correct, Durkheim battled tirelessly to separate sociology from the nominalism of history and the reductionism of psychology. But obviously, the demands of the day were different than they are today — sociology would have withered or failed to emerge fully as a distinct way of thinking had Durkheim not fought to delimit it from the prevailing intellectual orthodoxy of his day.[1] One problem with this is the sacralization associated with **separation** and boundary formation. With sacralization one necessarily introduces **taboo**, insularity, and rigid inflexibility as well as the hyper-valuation of one set of procedures (methods) over others. Once sociology had finally imbedded itself in the post-war monetary-quantoid-administrative system, and actually committed partial intellectual suicide, the way back to life was by liquidating the frozen reification of narrow disciplinary thinking that had abandoned conceptual thought for the lure of multivariate analyses. Be that as it may, let's go back to Durkheim's original intent when it came to sociology being a distinct field that had to focus on social facts of a completely different ontological status from other facts.[2]

'Fact' is derived from the Latin **factum** and the range of possible meanings includes "deed, action, event, occurrence, achievement, misdeed, real happening, result of doing, something done, in post-classical Latin [it is a] thing that has really occurred or is actually the case, thing known to be true … use as noun of neuter past participle of **facere** to make" (Oxford English Dictionary). **Facere** is the shared root for both 'fact' and 'fetish.' A **factum** denotes not just an action or thing done but also an "evil deed" by a **malefactor**. A fact is not only believed to be real but is actually real; it is a thing that may preexist our individual existence but it is nonetheless made (**manufactured**) through concerted effort, a fact is a **feat**, in other words, with definite **features**, that normally lead across time and space to **stupefaction** on the part of makers and remakers, the eventual **petrifaction** (hardening or reification) of our creations, and, ultimately when the sun sets for any fact, the **putrefaction** or rotting of the thing and the degeneration into a putrid monstrosity. For sociology, the main point is that our **creations** (our social facts) are more than subjective or intersubjective realities, that they impose themselves upon us as authorities, and that to grasp their social nature we cannot reduce them down to smaller parts, nor, by contrast, project them behind the world, turning them into metaphysical entities. As the criminally-neglected neo-Hegelian philosopher Bernard Bosanquet says, if it is a fact, it is a force ([1923] 1965: 36). This is pure Durkheim: social facts and things are immaterial forces and collective passions that have material effects. Are we really willing or able to give up on a concept of social forces? Certainly, neither Marx nor contemporary critical sociology can do so while retaining coherence for no theory of value, the great subject-substance of the modern world, would be possible without a theory of force. If sociology is dedicated to the study of 'facts' are we then destined to perpetual servitude? Durkheim was, after all, fond of statements like "Liberty is the fruit of regulation" that so outraged many of his critics.

Even if the state, the commodity, or any other 'fact' is indeed an actual 'fact' "it is no ultimate empirical datum, to be accepted and built into our world-picture willy-nilly. Its force has no claim on our approval merely because it exists: we prefer the attitude of Carlyle's Teufelsdröckh, holding these and all other facts in 'everlasting defiance' until we do approve them because we discover some value in them" (Hocking 1926: 74-75). Durkheim makes the same point in Suicide: the facticity of the social does not extinguish free will but actually proves its existence ([1897] 1951: 325). Durkheim would agree with Whitman, Sartre, Fromm, et al, that not only is one always free to disobey but one must disobey a great deal. Marx did not deny the facticity of the commodity but started from that premise and subjected the fact to withering, dialectical critique (of not only the commodity but simultaneously the established interpretive frameworks provided by classical political economy) to arrive at an objective sociological comprehension of the thing and a compelling **judgment** ([1867] 1976). There is no way beyond the commodity until we figure out what it is and the kind of force we are up against and there is something about that fact that resists revolutionary impulses.

Durkheim did share things in common with **philosophical** positivism, for example the principle that a whole possesses qualities that are different from those found in its parts,[3] but he rejected the notion that we are prohibited from obtaining objective knowledge of the substantial core of things.[4] We do not have to fear 'positive' knowledge

because negation without a corresponding positivity is meaningless. Social facts, then, are not exactly fate. A theory of alienation is incomplete without a theory of reconciliation and while life is often an unhappy state of affairs and filled with evils, society is, in the final analysis, not only inescapable without embracing a degree of self-destruction (Hardimon 1994: 20)[5] but a "positive evil" that we should embrace even as we criticise it (Durkheim [1897] 1951: 212). While Durkheim clearly does have an ontology from our critical perspective and even though Ben's project was to demystify the social realm I find myself in the paradoxical situation of agreeing with **both** Durkheim's **social** ontology and Ben Agger's anti-ontology because they lead to the same thing: the de-reification of the social realm and social facts (see Durkheim [1912] 1995: 7). How can a card-carrying critical theorist hold such an apparently contradictory position? Ask yourself this: is the journal Fast Capitalism nothing but the sum total of words published over the years? Is it nothing more than the sum of the individuals that edit and publish the journal? Or, rather, is Fast Capitalism a *sui generis* project that is greater than and different than the sum of its parts? Being an 'organic' reality that is more than organized electricity does not mean that it is a transcendental Thing. We can, with Ben, reject dreary ontology while embracing Durkheim's concept of a **social** ontology. Fast Capitalism is objectively real and not reducible to anything less than the journal itself.

Normal sociology, subjectivist empirical and positive quantitative research, is pointless from the standpoint of the classical and critical traditions of investigating social facticities because these facts are forms of authority, they possess objective "dignity" (Adorno 1976: 72) and commercial sociology, oddly enough, does not have at its disposal a concept of **authority** while it claims to be authoritative. In sociology, there is no substance but merely subjective attitudes of equal value and magnitude. In other words, what sociology investigates today, and for the last several generations, is the abstracted person rather than society, institutions, forces, and individuated incarnations of those forces; the **methods** themselves are 'objective' but the findings and interpretations are incapable of pointing beyond abstracted subjectivism (Adorno 1976: 72). As Durkheim says, empiricism is irrational ([1912] 1995: 13) and we cannot use reified, irrational methods to comprehend the irrationality (the "dignity") of social facts. Here is where Ben Agger, Marx, critical theory, and Durkheim make a secret rendezvous: not at the worship of dignified and alien abstractions, submission to inhuman powers, and resignation to soul-crushing institutions, but the genuine 'cult' of the concrete individual creatively engaged in collective practice. It might seem odd to think about it this way, but Ben's career, devoted to critical theory as a calling, was, in many ways a fulfillment of the Durkheimian ethos — not to mention the obvious connection to Weber's reconciliation with the vocation or calling as an **irrational** necessity in the modern world.[6]

When Ben says, "As an employee of a state university who works in a sociology department, I am no more or less exempt from the general principle of capitalist administration — discipline — than workers on the automobile assembly line or office managers in large corporations" (1989: 305) that is true but not the whole story. Unfortunately, the boundary line separating the sausage factory and the university is somewhat blurred or even artificial (cf. Marx [1867] 1976: 644) and the vast majority of teachers are merely docile tools of the system (professionals) but some, and not an insignificant number, have an actual profession and profess a calling that, unlike the ordinary professional and "privileged hirelings of the state" (Weber 1946: 153) entails a transvaluation of values contrary to those created and enforced within the capitalist system. Not all employees of a big, capitalized institution are created equal and Ben clearly demonstrated this fact. In Weber's "Science as a Vocation" (1946) we see an explicit quantity-quality dialectic pointing a way toward something like vocational enjoyment within the cells of the state. The critical theorist has to start from their individual topos (the employee of an impersonal institution) to create "an alternative textural practice" that "makes way for a possible future" radically different from what exists (Agger 1989: 303). When your colleagues down the hall throw their hands up in the air when it comes to qualitative evaluations of your work, defeated at the base of the linguistic and conceptual wall, they have little choice but to retreat into the domain of numerical abstraction, count up your 'productivity', and get out of your way. This amounts to the 'magical' ability to defeat disciplinarians (here, again, Ben and Durkheim make another encounter) and simultaneously inspire others to engage in critical reasoning and theoretical improvisation.

Like the rest of us, Durkheim placed little faith in the state, the church, or the capitalist firm when it came to human salvation. His corporatism sounds anachronistic to our postmodern ears but the 'corporate' association that Durkheim had in mind is more aligned with the concept of what we might think of as the original intent of a 'soviet' (i.e., harmonious association or **sovét**, a democratic council) or a renovation of the medieval guild concept, than to what we think of as a capitalist-bureaucratic structure or the contradictory industrial labor unions of the postwar era. When I think of Fast Capitalism and the remarkable network of scholars that circulate around that **sui generis** social nucleus, I think Ben was putting into practice the kind of intense, periodic, and creative ritual life

that Durkheim thought was one of the ways to solve the problem of life in the modern world. It might be an odd way of thinking of it, but <u>Fast Capitalism</u> provides a defined location within the larger social division of labor and functions as a mediating institution in the domain of critical thought and theory; the journal, to couch it in some Hegelianism, is a mediating particularity that connects individuals to the dimension of the organic and substantive heritage of social critique. <u>Fast Capitalism</u> is about to turn 12 years old and has had a better run than many critical writing collaborations have had. With Ben's passing I hoped the journal would find some way to press forward. I am pleased that all signs point to many more years of creativity with Tim Luke and David Arditi at the helm, carrying the vision of critical social theory and a community of alternative discourse forward for the next generation of social thinkers to participate in. In hindsight, it was inevitable I suppose. As an individual, Ben is no longer with us but his work and Fast Capitalism will survive for generations. Ben Agger is a social fact.

Endnotes

1. It's also worth pointing out that the surge in neo-Durkheimian studies and the top-down reevaluation and reconstruction of Durkheim and his disciples was still years away. The disciplinary consensus regarding Durkheim was still dominated at that time by the odious connections to Parsonian functionalism and positivistic and scientistic sociology.

2. Durkheim explicitly rejects the idea that sociology leads to any ontology or ontologizing of whatever kind. The only active element in society are individuals but that society, collective consciousness and the system of material supports, is a distinct and sui generis form of 'external' thinking that cannot be explained by any other fact. Today, we would say that Durkheim, while rejecting philosophical ontology would be seen as a social ontologist. When we get 'behind' the symbols and rites, we find that it is durable and periodic association that is being enacted and symbolized.

3. Note, we are making a distinction between positive philosophy (the whole and the concrete) and positive science which is dedicated to the parts and the abstract (Bosanquet 1912: 33).

4. For more on classical positivism see Spaulding (1918: 248).

5. Somewhere Hegel says something near and dear to my heart right now about the parent dying in the child.

6. One might object to the preservation of the irrational in modern life but, first, the irrational is always rational from another point of view and, second, if we wish to continue enjoying things like art and music, then the irrational is inevitable (Weber 1958). Nothing would be more inhuman than purely rationalized music.

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Would Adorno Download Music? Piracy, the Recording Industry and Reproduction Reconsidered

David Arditi

My first interaction with Ben Agger came after he invited me to give a presentation to the Center for Theory. The Center was established as a place to advance intellectual camaraderie at the University of Texas at Arlington and beyond. For me, this presented an opportunity for me to meet more scholars at UTA in the humanities and social sciences. I decided that my paper would be called "On Piracy," a theoretical engagement with Adorno about reproduction in the digital era. "Downloading is Killing Music: The Recording Industry's Piracy Panic Narrative" was recently accepted in <u>Civilisations</u>, and this presentation would be an attempt to turn from a Cultural Studies textual analysis to a deeper critical theoretical engagement with the idea of piracy. Agger was not a fan of the title "On Piracy," and encouraged me to consider "Would Adorno download music? piracy, the recording industry and reproduction reconsidered." After I agreed to the title change, Agger's emailed response was "Of course, Adorno wouldn't even have sent email, let alone 'tweeted'! Benjamin might have, though!" The paper evolved into an engagement with Adorno largely on the idea of reproduction. What follows is the paper from that presentation.

The transition from analog music to digital music gave us the perfect opportunity to rethink what it means to perform, record, and distribute music. Interestingly, these three aspects of music (performance, recording and distribution) are all parts of musical reproduction. At different moments in history, reproduction has had significantly different meanings as musical reproduction has shifted to adjust to the social relations of production. Most recently, the recording industry has been trying to deal with the implications of **digital** reproduction. Specifically, major record labels, in collaboration with the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), attempt to redefine musical reproduction as the execution of any digital music file. In the late 1990s, they began to argue that every time a music file is played on a computer, it creates a "copy" in random-access-memory (RAM). While this redefinition of reproduction has not been widely accepted, this at least has been the position of the recording industry and it was nearly codified in law. During the Clinton Administration, Patent Commissioner Bruce Lehman introduced a government white paper that would attempt to make the RIAA's position the law. After several years of debate, when the concepts from this white paper finally passed as the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA), it did not retain this definition of reproduction that considered each RAM execution a copy. Had this definition of reproduction been made the law, it would have redefined musical reproduction and ownership in the digital era as every play of a song would have required authorization. As Agger contends about the acceleration of fast capitalism, "nothing today is off limits to the culture industries and other industries that colonize not only our waking hours but also our dreaming" (Agger 2004a:3). By expanding reproduction to the execution of files, the recording industry would further colonize and commodity our consumption of culture.

The main issue here has to do with copyright law, the ideological apparatus that supports the commodification of culture. If playing a digital music file creates an unauthorized reproduction of music, then people playing music on their computers is potentially a violation of copyright law, even if the person playing the music purchased it legally. However, when discussions about piracy boiled over into the news media, it was not about consumers playing music on their computers, but rather, file-sharers downloading and uploading music from peer-2-peer networks.

For more than a decade, the journalists have been obsessed with piracy in relation to any discussion about digitization of the culture industries. Whether discussing film, television, newspapers or music, journalists engage a piracy panic narrative about how digital files signal the downfall of traditional media commodities. My research addresses this narrative in relation to the music industry (Arditi 2014a, 2014b). The piracy panic narrative of the recording industry argues that file sharing is piracy, piracy is stealing, and stealing hurts artists and their labels. Therefore, the major record labels argue that music fans who file share are not listening to free music, but rather, they are stealing income from their favorite artists. Finally, the RIAA claims that this will lead to the end of recorded music as we know it. For William Patry, head copyright lawyer for Google and one of the most prolific scholars of copyright law, this narrative is "the result of calculated political strategies to psychologically demonize opponents to make them appear to be 'bad' people" (Patry 2009:44). By labeling file-sharers as deviant criminals, the recording industry creates a platform from which to get legislators to act.

However, from the start, there is one massive hole in their argument: file-sharing is not piracy. Patry describes the way that metaphors are used to turn file-sharing from an innocent activity to one of the most reprehensible acts of the high seas.

With regard to copyright policy, piracy is the unauthorized **commercial** reproduction of copyrighted material. By claiming that file sharing is piracy, the industry has made the argument that copyright infringement occurs in the **refusal** to pay, not just in the unauthorized sale. This is to say nothing about the legality of file-sharing under copyright law, but only to point to the term **piracy**. In this definition of piracy, there is an explicit connection between piracy and capitalism. If people attempt to reproduce copyrighted material for profit without authorization, they are violating capitalist order. By establishing copyright law, the state provides the apparatus through which capital can exploit musicians and profit from the sale of culture.

It is easy enough to stop here: file sharing is not piracy because it is not commercial in nature. But I want to point to a deeper parallel between file-sharing and its connection to capitalism. I think that if we look closely at the term "reproduction" in this context it points to an inherent connection between musical reproduction and capitalism. For instance, what does it mean to reproduce music? How is reproduction connected to capitalism?

Interestingly, Theodor Adorno was working on a manuscript that was released posthumously entitled Towards a Theory of Musical Reproduction. Of course, Adorno's object of study is far removed from digital files, since he passed away in 1969 – long before mp3s and the Internet were a consideration for musical reproduction. However, this work does help to contribute to a critique of the concept of musical reproduction. Before I get to his theory of reproduction, I would like to begin by working through the concept in terms of its contemporary usage and work back towards Adorno's theory.

Theorizing Musical Reproduction

Today, I think that most people would uncritically accept that a definition of "musical reproduction" would involve making copies of recorded music. A rather encyclopedic definition of musical reproduction states that it "had its origins in the late nineteenth century . . . with an history of gradual improvements in fidelity, realism and portability" (Shuker 2012:315). Here the origin of musical reproduction connects with the invention of the gramophone and contains a technological determinism about the constant improvement of music reproduction technologies. This definition requires musical reproduction to be connected to a technology that can produce sound. The definition is technological determinist because it removes the inventors of sound reproduction machines from the discussion. Roy Shuker's definition imagines these machines that magically show up through the logic of progress which will always increase sound fidelity, become more realistic, and increase in portability. Jonathan Sterne provides a much more realistic version of the development of sound reproduction that focuses on the people who invented audio playback and recording technology (Sterne 2003). Significantly, Shuker's definition points to the fact that everyone who owns a music player (be it a tape deck, CD player, phonograph, or computer) can initiate the performance of music with this technology – musicians do not have to be around to reproduce music.

However, we cannot forget that musical reproduction goes back further than the gramophone. The first mass reproduction of music was made available by the printing press. According to Paul Théberge:

> Although musical notation and sound recording are, in most respects, fundamentally different from one another – both

technically and with regards to their modes of production, distribution, and consumption – there are, nevertheless, ways in which notation has prepared the social, cultural, and economic ground for sound reproduction. Both notation and sound recording were initially conceived of as primarily mnemonic or reproductive technologies, but each has, in its own manner, become **productive**; that is, each has become a vehicle for the planning and creation of musical works (Théberge 2006:289).

Théberge's concept of musical reproduction places notation as vital to the reproduction of sound. Rather than sound by a machine, musical notation enables reproduction by performance. Furthermore, Théberge claims that notation enabled large scale production of music in the form of symphonies and orchestras. Without notation, it would be difficult for a large group of musicians to coordinate a large complex musical composition. But more importantly, musical notation creates the capacity for musicians that never communicate with each other to play the same composition. The printing press enabled the mass reproduction of music by creating copies of a work that can be distributed globally.

Copyright law acknowledges these different types of musical reproduction by creating parallel copyrights. These include performance, publishing, mechanical and print copyrights. The copyright contains "the exclusive right to reproduce, publish, and sell copies of the copyrighted work, to make other versions of the work, and, with certain limitations, to make recordings of and perform the work in public" (Krasilovsky et al. 2007:89). Copyright owners can do all of this with their rights, and licenses allow copyright owners to give others the authority to exercise these rights. In other words, one person can own a copyright, but still license another person to reproduce that music. I want to highlight here that reproduction, performance, and composition become three different spheres in this legalistic understanding of reproduction. One person could own the copyright to perform, reproduce and print a song, but this does not have to be the case; and more importantly, the segmentation of copyrights into these discreet spheres disfigures the idea of reproduction itself. Above all, reproduction and printing are the same process – to record sound is to write sound. This point about discreet spheres and their relationship to reproduction will be important when I discuss Adorno later.

For scholars of popular music, there is no distinction between production and reproduction of music. Simon Frith contends that "Twentieth-century popular music means the twentieth-century popular record; not the record of something . . . which exists independently of the music industry, but a form of communication which determines what songs, singers and performances are and can be" (Frith 2006:232). Here popular music is understood, above all, as a recording. When rock bands make music, they go into the studio and record it – they do not write each individual part and come together to perform the recording as Bach or Beethoven would have with an orchestra. Though Frith does overstate this position by negating the individual writing process. Popular music happens in the studio and is a product of the technology available in the studio at the time of recording. There is no pop music without the intermediation of a recording. The fact that music is being recorded shapes the way that music is produced.

Where Frith celebrates the role of recording in the studio, Adorno laments the impact that technology has on the creation of music. Rather than heralding in the new capacities of the recording studio, Adorno criticizes the way that technology shapes music production. For instance, Adorno explains that "the only thing that can characterize gramophone music is the inevitable brevity dictated by the size of the shellac plate" (Adorno 2002b:278). If the physical medium can hold only five minutes worth of music, songs produced in that format will be limited to five minutes in length. If a medium can hold 60 minutes of music, then record labels will develop a way to fill that format with as much music as possible. Because audiences became accustomed to songs that were the length of a "side," songs have generally continued to adhere to those length limitations. At different moments, the recording industry has adopted different forms of recordings that integrate with different media formats. For instance, concept albums are longer compositions unified around a similar theme where each song on an album becomes a movement. These longer thematic albums were the result of there being more space available on an LP to record more music. In turn, the concept album is based on the idea of creating one overall artistic work in the form of multiple "sides." There is a direct relationship between the medium and the commodity; as changes occur in the music commodity's medium, the form (i.e. single or album) of the commodity is changed by the recording industry to better market the music commodity. With Adorno's critique of technology in the recording studio in mind, I will now turn to his theory of musical reproduction.

Adorno's Theory of Musical Reproduction

Adorno's theory of musical reproduction differs greatly from the ideas about reproduction that I have discussed

up to this point. For Adorno, reproduction and interpretation go hand-in-hand; there is a distinct difference between the original and the reproduction. This view of reproduction relies on the fact that musical notation is a representation of an idea, not the idea itself. In a way, Adorno views musical reproduction through a semiotic lens. Musical notation is far too imperfect to encapsulate every variable in a composer's song, but if the composer does not perform the song, it can only be a representation. For example, there is no way to represent timbre on a score. Or, mf (which means medium volume) may be a radically different volume in the 15th century England than 21st century America. Or, allegro, a tempo marking that means lively or rather quick, may change in meaning after punk music because what it means to be "rather quick" has changed. Over time, the meaning of what is written changes correspondingly. There are also two ways that performers can interpret music: 1) interpreting in the present or 2) interpreting in an imagined past. In either case, Adorno suggests that all that remains is an interpretation. Adorno asserts that the interpretation of musical notation is musical reproduction, and without interpretation, reproduction ceases to exist.

In fact, Adorno claims that "The history of musical reproduction in the last century has destroyed reproductive freedom" (Adorno 2002a:413). He identifies a shift from the interpretive nature of reproduction to the literal or mechanical reproduction of music. Whereas the individual performing a reproduction had artistic freedom when reading a score, the individual playing a recorded album lacks any ability to interpret. He says "In contrast to the nineteenth century, the decisive change experienced by contemporary musical reproduction is the destruction of the balance of individualistic society and individualistic production; the freedom of reproduction has therewith grown highly problematic, and nowhere is this seen more clearly than in the transition from competitive to monopoly capitalism" (Adorno 2002a:413). This shift is the product of a shift in capitalism. Mechanical reproduction is the consequence of a monopoly capitalism that attempts to enclose all commodities in order to extract the most profit as possible out of a single moment of production (i.e. a recording).

Whereas Walter Benjamin sees the democratic potential in mechanical reproduction by giving the masses access to art (Benjamin 1936), Adorno sees this mass reproduction as enabling a particular form of monopoly capitalism. Adorno claims that while recordings may expose a mediocre performer to some of the greatest performances, it also creates the room for that mediocre performer to create a second-hand interpretation that is in the end merely an imitation (Adorno 2006:24). In other words, bad performers can record bad music and sell it to the masses; I would add that some people are able to do this by virtue of having access to capital. For instance, Taylor Swift's father purchased part of a record label to get Swift her start. Mechanical reproduction, in Adorno's terms, is not about access to the means of consumption, it is about access to the means of production.

Jacques Attali

This issue of access to the means of consumption versus access to the means of production comes across in another theorization of mechanical reproduction. In Noise (Attali 1985), French economist Jacques Attali lays out the political economy of four modes of production for music. First, **Sacrificing** is a primitive economy that relies on the sacredness of music as a cultural form and depends on patronage by the aristocracy. Second, **Representing** is a mode of production brought about by the bourgeoisie in their attempt to demonstrate their newfound economic strength. Representing involves public performances by musicians reading musical notation. Third, **Repeating** is a mode of production brought about by industrial capitalism. Repeating uses mechanical reproduction to distribute recordings to the masses. Fourth, **Composing** is a future mode of production that Attali thinks will involve individuals writing music on computers for their own enjoyment – while Attali published this book in 1988, this fourth category is quite attuned to what seems to be happening with Digital Audio Workshops (such as Garage Band or Pro-Tools) today. What interests me here is the relationship between Attali's Representing and Repeating modes of musical production and a concept of musical reproduction.

During representing, the bourgeoisie were increasingly trying to assert their new economic and political power through cultural means. Their numbers required them to replace the court "jester" with orchestras. Going to concerts **represented** the bourgeoisie's newfound power. At the same time, in Adorno's terms, the performers were playing **representations** of compositions. Copyright was also developed at this time as a means to pay composers for their compositions – under this social relation of production the performers were required to pay the composers out of their income from performances. "In the beginning," Attali argues, "the purpose of copyright was not to defend artists' rights, but rather to serve as a tool of capitalism in its fight against feudalism" (Attali 1985:52). Copyright

aided in the transition to capitalism by enabling the enclosure of ideas. In this way, money began to circulate as a result of musical performances. Each performance was a reproduction of a written composition. This is where the idea of musical piracy arises – an unauthorized performance (i.e. reproduction) was considered a pirate performance. Furthermore, it was a violation of copyright law not to pay the composer for the performance. This type of pirated performance seems entirely removed from our conceptions of piracy today.

During repeating, everyone can experience music with little to no economic power. Mechanical reproduction created the condition which would allow music to reach the masses. Whether this was through radio or records, everyone could hear the same music. Attali claims that "A new society emerged, that of mass production, repetition, . . . Usage was no longer the enjoyment of present labors, but the consumption of replications" (Attali 1985:87–88). Repeating is a mode where performance and consumption are disassociated; it enables time shifting. Unlike Benjamin, Attali views mechanical reproduction with suspicion because of the effects that it has on labor. Mechanical reproduction undercuts labor by allowing a handful of musicians to make the vast majority of reproductions. This process was visible in mid-century America as musicians in the American Federation of Musicians, the musicians' labor union, resisted soundtracks in Hollywood films because it eliminated positions for musicians in pit orchestras at movie theaters across the country (Zinn, Kelley, and Frank 2002).

But for Attali, time shifting goes beyond the disassociation between performance and consumption to the time embedded in the recording. He contends that recording

> makes the stockpiling of time possible . . . For we must not forget that music remains a very unique commodity; to take on meaning, it requires an incompressible lapse of time, that of its own duration. Thus the gramophone, conceived as a recorder to stockpile time, became instead its principal user . . . The major contradiction of repetition is in evidence here: **people must devote their time to producing the means to buy recordings of other people's time** (Attali 1985:101).

People must work to make money, which they use to buy recordings. In this way, repetition enables capitalism. Adorno and Marx would explain this in terms of **reproduction** of the worker: i.e. workers labor more to purchase commodities to consume in their "leisure" time. Or in Adorno's words, "Amusement under late capitalism is the prolongation of work" (Horkheimer and Adorno 1972:137).

Conclusion and Implications

One conclusion that can be drawn from this analysis is that any discussion of musical reproduction is always-already a discussion anchored in capitalism. Yes, the term "piracy" only categorizes that which is explicitly commercial, so any reproduction that does not include an economic exchange cannot be piracy. However, this characterization may be splitting hairs. Since musical reproduction is a product of capitalism, it is always only a matter of time before corporations use their power to reconfigure the law to facilitate the commodification of music. For that reason, I think it is important to attempt to develop a new conceptual framework for music that can exist without using reproduction.

Some may argue that the Internet provides alternatives to this system by allowing musicians to interact directly with their fans. This **could** give musicians control that allows them to determine how their fans will listen to music. They can distribute their music online for free; use music as an advertisement to get people to shows, etc. However, this is a short slippery slope to other ways of monetizing music or just a step that circumvents major record labels. Agger calls this enthusiasm technological utopianism – a term that he uses to describe those who felt that "virtual capitalism represents a new stage of civilization in which all social problems disappear" (Agger 2004b:6). In fact, those who push technological utopianism often develop the very ideology through which to perpetuate virtual capitalism. And this is my underlying concern about reproduction because it seems to me that as long as we discuss recordings, people (whether they are fans or musicians) begin talking about ways to make money from the sale of recordings.

Now, I am not naïve enough to think that musicians could spend their life performing music without monetary compensation. As long as the mode of production is capitalism, if someone wants to perform music as a full-time job, they have to have a way to earn a wage from it. For better or worse, musical reproduction created a system where musicians were brought into capitalism through wage labor. Yet, it is only in rare instances, today, that musicians earn an adequate amount of money to earn a living from performance. Rather, musicians tend to "keep their day job" by

working in a different industry, often precariously employed, in hopes of one day materializing their dream of playing music full-time. This is the furthest thing removed from any idealized artist earning money from the fruits of their artistic labor. The system traps musicians in a vicious cycle of underemployment, and if they are lucky enough to be on a label, debt peonage.

Some have developed alternative theorizations about ways that musicians could earn a living. For instance, economist Dean Baker proposes to eliminate copyright through an intricate public system where taxpayers could assign their taxes to performers. He proposes "a modest refundable tax credit -- an artistic freedom voucher (AFV) -- that would allow them to give $75-$100 a year to support creative work. This money could either go directly to the worker or to an intermediary that supports specific types of creative work" (Baker n.d.). Music fans could allocate part of their taxes to musicians who participate in the system; if not, that money would go into a general fund to be distributed equally to all participating musicians. While still relying on reproduction and wages, a system such as this would provide an opportunity outside of copyright for musicians to make money. This is not the solution, but it is an interesting place to begin thinking through the problem.

Adorno would not have been so concerned with issues of downloading music legally or illegally on the Internet. But rather, he would have been highly critical of the system that enables copyright and digital musical reproduction as we know it. Recordings themselves do not allow room for interpretation. For that reason, Adorno may have argued that people can consume music however they want because the problem lies in music's production.

I should have seen Agger's email as an invitation to place Adorno and Benjamin squarely in conversation with each other. Much of the discussion following my presentation was about the tension between these two Frankfurt School theorists. But what most surprised me was Agger's response to his own simple question, "Adorno or Benjamin?" My response was a long-winded argument for Adorno's perspective on negative dialectics and his overall contention that recording technology destroys music. Having read Agger, I expected his own response to favor Adorno. But he ended the question and answer session with the one word response "Benjamin." He never contextualized this to me, and I wish I would have pushed him on it, but now I can only assume it related to the hope to see humanity overcome the entrapments of capitalism.

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Exploring the Chaos of Commodification: From the Arcades to the Cascades with Benjamin and Leopold

Timothy W. Luke

In this study, I work through ideas from Ben Agger on critical theory to develop a provisional exploration of how Walter Benjamin helps us understand the chaos of commodification. This analysis also unfolds as a thought experiment about the Anthropocene as economies and environments merge in today's planetary urbanization. To accomplish these goals, I also examine the merits of mapping Walter Benjamin's critique of capitalist modernity as well as Aldo Leopold's understanding of biotic community against the advent of the Anthropocene to elaborate a layered critique of built and unbuilt environments in the contemporary world-system.

Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) was an eclectic essayist, cultural critic, and aesthetic thinker, whose life unfolded in Germany during the Second Empire, World War I, the Weimar Republic, and Third Reich. Born in Berlin, he studied at the Universities of Freiburg and Berlin where he saw himself contributing to the outlines of a "cultural Zionism." During World War I, he studied at the Universities of Munich and Bern before earning his PhD in 1919. Along the way, he came to know, or work with, Heinrich Rickert, Rainer Marie Rilke, Gershon Scholem, Ernst Bloch, and Leo Strauss before becoming affiliated with the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt. He continued to write on French literature, German drama, and metropolitan Europe as he interacted with Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Georg Lukács, Herman Hesse, Berthold Brecht, Kurt Weill, Hannah Arendt, George Bataille, and others, while he sought academic work in Germany. Living at times in Spain, Italy, Russia, and France, he began his Das Passagen-Werk (The Arcades Project) about the Paris Arcades in 1927, which was published posthumously in 1982. With Hitler's rise to power in 1933, however, he became an exile. Ultimately, he ended up in France after the 1940 German invasion, but was on the arrest list due to his Jewish identity. He committed suicide on September 25, 1940 in Catalonia after leaving his Arcades Project manuscript with Georges Bataille in Paris.

Aldo Leopold (1887-1948) was a contemporary of Benjamin, although faraway in the American Midwest. His love for the land led him from Iowa to the Yale Forest School where he graduated in 1909. Leopold started his career as a conservationist, teacher, and writer, working with U.S. Forest Service in Arizona and New Mexico. After being transferred to Madison, Wisconsin, Leopold refined his thoughts about wildlife management and published them as the first textbook in this field. That study led to his appointment to an academic chair in game management at the University of Wisconsin in 1933. With his family, he slowly cultivated the ecological restoration of an old farm on the Wisconsin River outside of Baraboo in Sauk County. At "The Shack," they replanted trees, and restored native prairie plants. Leopold began writing essays about his experiences there, which were posthumously published during 1949 after his death from a sudden heart attack in 1948. The essay collection, A Sand County Almanac, became one of the most widely read books about America's environmental heritage, and it remains a classic work in conservation thought, environmental ethics, and wildlife ecology.

Benjamin's fascination with the nineteenth century metropolis, especially the character of the **flâneur** on Parisian boulevards, and the material life in Paris' grand arcades, makes this comparison perhaps seem unlikely. His work sifts through the detritus of La Belle Époque, and he died in 1940 -- just as World War II intensified, and five years before "The Great Acceleration" (McNeill and Engelke, 2014) begins after V-J Day. Like Leopold's meditations

on America's prairies, highlighting how urban spaces were being degraded in related ways, Benjamin's thought anticipates many of the harshest contradictions in today's anthropogenic environments. The dialectical interrelation in Benjamin's and Leopold's appraisals of cityscape with countryside, urban life and rural living, industrial and agricultural existence, mental and manual labor, strolling around urban streets and hiking out in wild country, in fact, reveal many improbable parallels between Benjamin and Leopold. At the same time, their thinking sets the stage for Ben Agger's explorations in critical theory, especially the "representationality" of contemporary capitalist critique in the "soci (onto)logy" of American society (Agger, 1989a). Like Agger, this study follows the Frankfurt School "to link economic with cultural and ideological analysis" (Agger, 1991: 22) in explaining variations in the critical representation of "nature" and "culture" in global capitalism after Marx.

The historic shift around the North Atlantic basin towards greater urbanization after 1815 coevolves with the testing of new freedom culturally, economically, and technologically. These fresh currents of historical change colliding with once obdurate biological contingency, as Foucault observed, (1990: 135-159) transforms human freedom as well as nonhuman necessity, which Agger mapped out as "fast capitalism" (1989b). Benjamin's artful reinterpretation of the city and country in global exchange also echoes in Leopold's writing. His meditative walks in the countryside led him to develop a "land ethic" for humans to coexist with nonhumans more justly in urban and rural biotic communities. An insight from Adorno links these observations from Agger, Benjamin and Leopold. At the dawn of the nineteenth century, "philosophy had succeeded in refining the concept of natural history by taking up this theme of the awakening of an enciphered and petrified object" (Adorno, 1984: 119) in the eternal transience seen in nature by philosophers, physicists or poets. Hence, "the deepest point where history and nature converge lies precisely in this element of transience. If Lukács demonstrates the transformation of the historical, as that which been, into nature, then here is the other side of the phenomenon: nature itself is seen as transitory nature, as history" (Adorno, 1984: 119).

Benjamin, in turn, adds his own twists to allegorical reasoning about cultural significance as "the playing out of a particularity; it is expression," and Adorno asserts this turn reveals how the basic qualities of necessity and transience for "the Earth signifies nothing but just such a relationship between nature and history all being or everything existing is to be grasped as the interweaving of historical and natural being" (Adorno, 1984: 119, 121). The causes and effects at play in the Anthropocene's interwoven historical and natural becoming are a degraded environment, a significant wealth gap, uneven development, and depleted fossil fuels. These links of history and nature are the markers of what "truly is an age of decline, as evidenced by these social problems of modernity and postmodernity" (Agger, 1991: 9). Leopold's musings about the biotic community in the sand hill country of rural Wisconsin, in turn, takes a parallel trail to Benjamin's wandering in the Arcades of Paris.

By the time Benjamin took his own life, the first stirrings of the Anthropocene were recasting Nature. Between 1940 and 1945,

> Human beings had already violated the Earth's 'natural laws' by staging a controlled nuclear chain reaction. By 1945, the machining of rare natural elements, like uranium, into explosive devices, human beings begin to ward nature by accelerating matter into new artificial realms of transuranic de-nature, introducing into the environment many new materials, like neptunium and plutonium that hitherto did not exist in Nature as it had been known. . . Nature now becomes in many respects truly anthropogenic, not autogenic or theogenic, and the powers causing its anthropogenesis also arguably begin to implode many existing cultural, political, and social systems predicated upon stable natural realisms (Luke, 1996: 499).

The nuclear revolution is the anthropogenic core of the Anthropocene, and the Great Acceleration that follows it degrades many existing environmental conditions of human cultural, economic, political, and social practices (McNeil and Engelke, 2014).

A new biopolitical nexus, then, takes hold after 1945 with the Great Acceleration's continuous technological, social, and cultural remix of the natural as the historical. Plainly, Benjamin anticipated these shifts in Paris, Moscow and Berlin, or "the city." Now, however, even these urbane centers and quiet rural peripheries, like Wisconsin's Sauk County, shift shapes together. The not-yet-urban, never-urban or once-urban, as spatial expanses of nature, manifest of the extraordinary historical machinations Benjamin scrutinizes in the metropolis. Much of what he examines in his Arcades Project, or <u>Passagen-Werk</u>, is from a time in which barely ten cities had populations of one million, and much of the world was predominately rural. As some debates about the Anthropocene note, this number of cities now tallies over 300, and over half the planet's human inhabitants live in the vast networks of urban sprawl underpinning "planetary urbanization" (Brenner and Schmid, 2014). The semiotic systems of fast capitalist exchange now coevolve with this hyperurbanization. As Agger maintains, "simplification oversimplifies a complex

reality," and these aesthetic, critical and sociological dialects cannot escape how "language in structuring reality is structured by it, thus becoming a material force" (Agger, 1989b: 156).

Aldo Leopold's "land ethic" already acknowledged this growing citification of wilderness by enjoining each human to join his or her "land-community" as a "plain member and citizen of it" (Leopold, 1966: 240) in "the country." His call to see biotic successions in the landscape "not only of plants and soils, but of the animal community subsisting thereon" (Leopold, 1966: 242) is an appeal to avoid wrecking the land-community, while at the same time being an invitation to walk among its coinhabitants to acquire a shared spirit of conservationist coexistence. While Leopold admits his appeal was not widely heeded, he maintains that "conservation is a state of harmony between men and land" (1966: 243).

It is fair to ask if the whole Earth for humanity is increasingly derularized, deagrarianized, and denaturalized mangles of urbanizing growth in which one finds not identical, but also not dissimilar, traces of the tendencies Benjamin tracked in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century metropolis. Such urbanization is, in fact, another ominous indicator of ecological degradation, evolving in parallel with greenhouse gases: carbon dioxide as parts per million in the atmosphere rose from around 280 ppm in 1700 to only 293 ppm by 1900 (eight years after Benjamin's birth). In 1940 when Benjamin died, the level had rapidly risen to 307 ppm; and, in 2009, it has risen to 388 ppm. (Breeze, 2005: 11). In April 2017, it hovers around 410 ppm, and all life forms on Earth live in a gas greenhouse.

Pulling the planet under this increasingly denser gas greenhouse reshapes the conceptual distinctions Adorno drew between "Nature" versus "Society." Life on planet Earth is marked by greater levels of "artifactuality" in the natural facticity of its environments. Nature citified under the gas greenhouse still can be seen, especially by environmentalists, as raw, untamed or wild, but these attributes now are more conditional, provisional or complex under the accumulated atmospheric detritus of fossil fuel civilization spinning out its shrouds of pollutants around the world.

Amid the exhausted compound by-products of today's biopower, "the urban revolution" appeared in 1970 only as "a horizon, and illuminating virtuality" (Lefebvre, 2003: 17). It is more easily identifiable in today's derularizing/ overurbanizing ways of life. While "the urban" in Lefebvre's analysis is abstract, its fields of force pull together the mangles of rapid climate change -- from cap-and-trade greenhouse gas markets, genetically modified food or Greenland's glaciers melting to mass global extinctions, motorcar biofuels from trash or massive Montanan nature preserves managed by mass media moguls. The Anthropocene clearly is another aspect of "speeding up fast capitalism" (Agger, 2004) in which the energy, information, labor, and material needed to produce the instantaneity of globality leave noxious by-products as enduring planetary degradation (Agger, 2004: 6). Today's citified countrysides, in the meantime, bring the world's environments and their overburdened inhabitants the mystified "green goods" of sustainability, smart growth, and slow cities. These myths of sustainable development, however, shroud environmental ruination refined from organized corporate green washing.

Benjamin, therefore, then provides counter-intuitive anchor points to discuss ecology, environmentalism or Nature to the degree he regards "the city" as the essence of capitalist modernity, industrial management, and scientific materialism. Because the city is the matrix of modernity for Benjamin, urban life also "encapsulates the characteristic features of modern social and economic structure, and is thus the site for their most precise and unambiguous interpretation" (Gilloch, 1997: 5-6). Whatever the city marks, and wherever or whenever those marks are made beyond the city, one finds useful registers for a critical reappraisal of capitalist modernity, including the Earth's backwoods, countryside or wilds.

Another definitive sign of citification in the wilderness appears in Aldo Leopold's fusion of "a civic life" with "the countryside" in his Sand County Almanac. Implicitly affirming Benjamin's realization that Schmitt's sense of sovereignty uniquely extends to the state the power to be "Lord of all creation" (Benjamin, 1985: 85), Leopold stands ready to serve the state as a great law-giver, if not virtuous tyrant, by retraining souls and societies in the virtues of "land care." Anxious about the unpredictability of anarchic market forces, accidental historical contingencies, and allied blocs of railroad, banking or financial institutions all eager to superexploit the environment, he saw new social forces at work that aimed to statalize/citify "the country" as "land." In his green manifesto to propound "a land ethic" and bless "citizenship for all beings," however, there lurks the technoscientific proclivity for "green governmentality" (Luke, 1997) artfully to place this ethical polis within any paddock or pasture.

To a degree, the exurbanized spatialities of Wisconsin's Sauk County anchor in Leopold's thinking what Benjamin regarded as "the restoration of order in the state of emergency: a dictatorship whose utopian goal will always be to replace the unpredictability of historical accident with the iron constitution of the laws of nature," while, at the same time, deploying an ascetic credo of outdoor virtues "to establish a corresponding fortification against a state of

emergency in the soul, the rule of the emotions" (Benjamin, 1985: 74). The tensions building between these spaces also track Leopold's implicit citification of the wilds in a historic compromise of values "achieved by reappraising things unnatural, tame, and confined in terms of things natural, wild, and free" (Leopold, 1966: xix).

Once glassed-over by greenhouse gases, and then monitored for its degradation via commodification, untamed natural wilderness can be more easily regarded as a domestic artificial commons. When making this citified shift in thinking, Leopold hopes humans would see their shared cultural coexistence with non-humans: "When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect. There is no other way for land to survive the impact of mechanized man, nor for us to reap from it the esthetic harvest it is capable, under science, of contributing to culture" (Leopold, 1966: xix).

The rise of this "second nature," or alienated labor and frozen capital reified "under science," as Leopold suggests, out in the boondocks of bourgeois spatiality was anticipated by Marx and Lukács. They also regarded these domains as extruded standing reserves for modernity. Adorno notes, "Lukács already perceived this problem as foreign to us and a puzzle to us," and, as a result, awakening these inward, estranged, complex meanings becomes "what is here understood by natural history. Lukács envisioned the metamorphosis of the historical qua past into nature; petrified history is nature, or the petrified life of nature is a mere product of historical development" (Adorno, 1984: 118). As these reified market conditions shape how natural history develops, then the petrification of historical products and by-products in nature also clearly becomes more common. This ruination of spirit, the body, and nature itself, in turn, provides a crucial vantage point to reappraise environmentalism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

From the Arcades to the Cascades

As "the historical" exceeds the confines and constraints of "the biological" during the nineteenth century (Foucault, 1990: 135-159), Nature and Society become, in many respects, "the environment," or flexibly mangled assemblages of both natural and social forces, which gels as biopower (Luke, 1997). These forces do not accelerate until the closing of many old imperial frontiers in the Americas, Asia, and Africa around Benjamin's birth in 1892. Nonetheless, the origins of mainstream environmental thinking during the closing of the American frontier in the 1890s indicates how the simultaneous rapid urbanization, industrialization and acceleration of everyday life push the ill-effects of deruralization, deagrarianization, and detraditionalization into everyday life for more and more of the Earth's growing human populations.

Despite Leopold's idylls about Nature in the Wisconsin woods, the "great out-doors," "wilderness" or the "environment" are becoming hyperurbanized by the mid-twentieth century. Materially repositioned as complex objective conjunctions of natural, social, and historical forces, they are mentally, at the same time, expressing a salient "dream-and wish-image of the collective" (Benjamin, 1999: 905) caught in the "lowly in-doors." Once historicized in the (con)fusion of the biological and the social, Nature can be regarded "like Janus: it has two faces" (Benjamin, 1999: 543) that express opposing and complementary tendencies in dialectical tension. Where others wish to see only authenticity in the environment, one plausibly can argue with equal determination that is more ambiguity in play here as artifice pervades the environment's key qualities.

Benjamin asserts, and Buck-Morss (1989: x) underscores, "in an era of industrial culture, consciousness exists in a mythic, dream state, against which historical knowledge is the only antidote. But the particular kind of historical knowledge that is needed to free the present from myth is not easily uncovered. Discarded and forgotten, it lies buried within surviving culture…" What is buried, how it is forgotten, and why it is discarded are challenging questions. Such knowledges often are regarded as neglected, invisible or buried due to their uselessness to anyone in power.

Buck-Morss' detailed "dialectics of seeing" from Paris arguably must now be supplemented with another approach for "seeing dialectics" beyond Paris to fathom how the consciousness and experience of wilderness, Nature, environments, and ecology exists in mythic dream states of a processed world.[1] Benjamin's Arcades Project begins this remarkable undertaking; but, it is fragmentary, and polyvalent in its purposes. Centered on Paris, it speaks about more than that one city in deciphering of capitalism from the detrital stuff and daily truck in its great enclosed markets. The Arcades of Paris were close to Benjamin, and that city was as good a place as any to explore for him. What about today?

I reside thousands of miles from Paris, France, but I live near Pearisburg, Virginia -- the county seat of Giles County where there is a striking park and waterfall, often visited and photographed, on Little Stony Creek, which is known as "the Cascades."   Here, my analysis continues the critique of the commodity form in the early years of twenty-first, and last years of the twentieth, centuries by reappraising this natural site's reified ruinations. The merits of "a Cascades Project," positioned along with "the Arcades Project," are considerable. One also should bear in mind that these cascades are but one of many. All across the USA from the Appalachian to the Cascade Mountains, hundreds of other "Cascades" are out there to be discovered and deciphered in comparable terms, allowing one to leverage a fortuitous interplay of homophony and propinquity to explore the issues raised by Benjamin.[2]

The Cascades National Recreational Trail lies in the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests in Virginia and West Virginia with about 1.8 million acres of public land. Surrounding this site, the Mountain Lake Wilderness laps into two states and three counties with over 11,000 acres of fairly roadless terrain with old growth forest straddling the Eastern Continental Divide.[3] These ranges of raw nature, however, are at the same time an elaborate anthropogenic apparatus dedicated to resource management, land conservation, and recreational industry. Turning to the Cascades for this study is apropos, since they can reframe seeing dialectics.

This waterfall and forested watercourse lies in the Little Stony Creek Valley of Giles County, Virginia at the base of Salt Pound Mountain the Appalachian chain. While it is not being mined itself now, Salt Pond Mountain and sister peaks near-by and not so far away in Virginia and West Virginia are being systemically scraped down to bed rock to remove fossil fuel from their coal beds -- millions of tons have been shipped around the world to be burnt in coal-fired power plants, steel foundries, space heating systems. To some extent, the gas greenhouse now shrouding the Cascades as well as the entire planet is glazed with burnt fossil fuels extracted from the same mountains being remade to operate as attractive development schemes, like state parks, county campgrounds, local curiosities, and all the other travel-centered distractions of the leisure industries embedded in national recreation areas. The apparent harmony of Nature and Society in the mythic materialities of the Cascades clearly mystify what is an "externally contradictory social order, both robbing labor and despoiling the environment" (Agger, 1992: 8), although few pilgrims on the trails have those thoughts as they wend their ways through natural attractions and social artifice in search of an aura of authenticity.

Again, Adorno provides perspective for thinking about the Arcades by reversing the polarities in observations he made about Benjamin; namely, he had "as no one else, the ability to regard historical things, manifestations of objectified spirit, "culture," as if they were nature" (Adorno, 1970: 17). With regard to the Cascades, then, one must begin to gauge apparently natural things, manifestations of necessity itself, or "nature," as if they are "culture" as very good conditions for seeing dialectics.

The Cascades Near Pearisburg

Working parallel to Benjamin, one can regard the places and spaces of the Cascades as countless boulevards exteriorized, not unlike those coming out from the interiors of cities and towns, until they overlap in countrysides. Such cascades coevolve with other new developments of affluent industrial production and by-production: the glassed-over, walled-up and spread-out by-ways of built and unbuilt social formations on the Earth under the gas greenhouse. The occupants and owners join together in ventures that accelerate the citification/deruralization of the world's overurbanized workings. Sometimes at the end, other times at the start, and elsewhere alongside, the cascades of planetary urbanization are evolving elaborate markets. In many respects, the paths to the Cascades are not unlike city byways; and, citified sprawl crawls closer, deeper, faster into every crack, crevasse, and cataract of the Cascades—a processed world maximized and minimized on multiple scales.

Such parallels are not necessarily "the **locus classicus**" for identifying nature, but they allude to all the rifts and conjunctures that express late modernity up close, faraway, right now, once before, up ahead, out behind, quite deep, and real high. Following Benjamin's analytical lead at the Arcades, one can turn to an "illustrated guide book" on the Cascades, published today as a web page, which captures this uniquely processed appropriation of the wilderness. Cascade Falls draws visitors from around the world, and the Giles County web site [http://virginiasmtnplayground. com/cascades/] provides a colorful description of its overindustrialized panoramic qualities:

Cascade Falls

Cascades Recreation Area, Jefferson National Forest, Pembroke
For more information call:
540-552-4641

About 150,000 visitors a year visit the Cascades. Without question, Cascade Falls is one of the most beautiful waterfalls in Virginia and possibly on the entire East Coast. Little Stony Creek falls over a vertical cliff in several different streams. Several streams cascade a couple times on the way down while others fall the whole distance of the falls.

The 69 ft. falls crash into a large pool surrounded by two hundred foot cliff walls from which large ice formations hang in the winter. The scene is both breathtaking and peaceful as the falls combine both power and beauty. The falls are also fairly easy to view, with wooden stairs and platforms on one side of the pool allowing a visitor to get very close to the falls as well as allowing a photographer many different angles for photographs.

About the Hiking Trail

The Upper Trail is a beautiful hike with scenic, aerial views of Little Stony Creek. But, it's only half of the well-loved four-mile loop. Picking its way along the banks of Little Stony, the Lower Trail pauses at the edge of buggy backwaters and hangs over gushing cataracts. It winds its way through families of moss-covered boulders and cuts through rhododendron thickets. The roar of Little Stony is its constant companion as it climbs toward the main waterfall. The spectacular views from the Lower Trail are as beautiful as the Cascades. It takes four bridges and innumerable stone steps and walkways to give visitors this experience. The original trail, built in the 1960s, was so artfully constructed that it seemed to belong there.

In 1996, melting snow and heavy rains turned Little Stony into a raging torrent. When the waters receded, three of the bridges and much of the trail were missing. The U.S. Forest Service allocated $400,000 to rebuild the trail and make improvements at the trailhead. They turned to Charlie Dundas, whose company, West Virginia-based Tri-State, had done a good bit of repair work to the trails over the years. Dundas said the Forest Service liked his plan to rebuild the trail without heavy equipment, and thus disturb the land as little as possible. When he began, a quarter of the two-mile trail had been destroyed.

"Certain key areas were just totally gone," Dundas said. "It [the flood] scoured it down literally to bedrock." In some places, the old trail was resurrected, in others all new trail was built. A few ghosts of the old trail remain – stone steps that survived the flood but now lead nowhere.

The new bridges are mighty structures, supported by enormous beams and enclosed on both sides with log railings. They should have at least a fighting chance if Little Stony floods again. Tri-State sought to restore not just access, but also the character of that original trail. The countless stone steps seem at home here and so will the bridges once they've been smoothed and stained by a few Giles County winters. And, just like the old trail, there are plenty of roots and rocks to trip over and slick spots to slip on.

The closer the trail gets to the big waterfall, the more work there was for Dundas. Here the trail clings more desperately to the steep banks of the gorge. Raised stone walkways, held together with steel pins, were built to make it passable. But the rougher the terrain gets, the more impressive the sights. Furious white water rips between boulders to fall churning into a pool below. Up ahead, a small stream tumbles down the side of a cliff into Little Stony.

Finally, the upper and Lower Trails meet and ramble on to a stunning climax. Vegetation and an enormous boulder conspire to hide the falls from sight for as long as possible. When hikers round the boulder, the Cascades suddenly appear, roaring for attention. The waterfall reigns in this bowl-shaped arena it has carved from the mountain. Little Stony's rushing waters leap from the edge, cascading down the rock wall and landing in churning, misty turmoil in the pool below. From the rocks midstream or the observation deck near the top, the sight is spectacular enough to merit the thousands, if not millions, of photos that have been taken.

Time to go home. Tradition demands that the Upper Trail be taken back. From its lofty perch on the side of the gorge, it provides hikers with a new perspective of Little Stony. Its direct route is an asset now, as it leads the weary back to their cars and a cold drink in Pembroke.

[http://gilescounty.org/cascades.html]

As these places are continuously valorized on the internet as an alluring nexus of recreational convenience for "Outdoor Adventures," the Cascades shine worldwide with webs of phantasmagoric allure.

Here, one does not see the **flâneur** on the trail. Instead, there is "the hiker," or the **randonneur** (or **randonneuse**), planning a **randonné** to the Cascades. He or she got information up-front on "How to Find It," along with "Driving Directions," and "For more information Call: 540-552-4641 Jefferson National Forest." This information is not about the wilds; it is instead cut-and-dried directions through elaborate and embedded built environments. The ruse of nature remains since the original trail is "so artfully constructed that it seems to belong there." The rush of Culture, however, flows through "mighty structures" all are "enclosed on both sides," which hint at the easy processed urbanity of Arcades-like metropolitanized spatialities nesting in the woods.

The Randonneur and Ruins

Amidst the Arcades, "the **flâneur** plays the role of the scout in the marketplace," and, "as such, he is also the explorer of the crowd" (Benjamin, 1999: 21). Out in the Cascades, one does not see the stroller, but rather "the hiker." Of course, the **randonneur** is an avid scouting explorer, but this urbanized subject tramps along each nature trail, white-water run, pristine seashore or distant ridge seeking to affirm a slightly different pre-processed quality. For the **flâneur**, "the newness for which he was on the lookout all his life consists in nothing other than this phantasmagoria of what is "always the same." (Benjamin, 1999: 22). The **randonneur** seems intent on another range of **phantasma** from wilderness preserves -- or the affirmation of more, greater, and better open space that is "the same as always." For Benjamin, "the final voyage of the **flâneur**: death: Its destination: the new" (1999: 22). Perhaps for the **randonneur**, the continuing trek is life, or birth/maturation/ reproduction/death? And, so the destination of this modernity is "always the same," but also the continuously renewed "soci(onto)logy" of postindustrial living (Agger, 1989a). The phantasmagoria of the Cascades are real, even though their contents are more distributed, far-flung, and remote than concentrated, right-up-close, or near-by.

If it is true that for the **flâneur**, the "crowd" Benjamin sees is but a loose veil hiding the "masses," then for today's hiker, or the **randonneur**, "the outdoor recreational public" is at least one contemporary expression of more variegated, numerous collective agglomeration of the "masses." Edward Abbey's (1968) diatribes against "industrial tourism," and his fascination with the conditions of "desert solitaire," also express this shift quite effectively. In this regard, Abbey's visions of the **randonneur** highlight another effort, like those of Benjamin, to remember that "in every era the attempt must be made anew to wrest tradition away from a conformism that is about to overpower it" (Benjamin, 1969a: 255). Edward Abbey's fictional works with their accounts of many arduous hikes across desert wastelands (Luke, 2007: 5-28) often define the essential qualities of the contemporary **randonneur**. Purposely anarchistic, Abbey (1968; 1977) propounds an idiosyncratic vision of the arts of "hiking" that is loaded with conflicted emotions about tramping through planetary urbanization's contradictory spaces of ruination and conservation.

Leopold's hikes across the Wisconsin sand hill country, Southwestern deserts, and Midwestern farm lands of America echo a similar critical spirit. Despite Leopold's allegedly authentic laments for Nature's alleged purity on his many hikes, Lefebvre nails a bitter truth about many environmentalists' aesthetic conceits: "everyone wants to protect and save nature; nobody wants to stand in the way of an attempt to retrieve its authenticity. Yet at the same time everything conspires to harm it" (1991: 30-31). As the gas greenhouse heats, the wilds around Moab,

the Wisconsin sand hills, and the woods near Pearisburg serve as rich registers in which as "each illusion embodies and nourishes the other . . . the rational is thus naturalized, while nature cloaks itself in nostalgias which supplant rationality" (Lefebvre, 1991: 30).

In speaking as Nature's voice in the Utah canyon country, Abbey states "my sole purpose has been a private and egocentric one. I have no thought of serving others; such ambition is beyond both my intention and my powers. I am myself the substance of the book" (1989: xiv). On the other hand, Leopold's meanderings around Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Arizona are more openly public-spirited treks through the wilds to join "in conversation" with Nature. Admiring both animals and plants, like the birds and squirrels he found in Arizona's mountains, Leopold's land ethic moves him to regard non-human beings as "poker-faced but exuding emotion with voice and tail, told you insistently what you already knew full well: that never had there been so rare a day, or so rich a solitude to spend it in" (Leopold, 1966: 133). By hearing conversations of sorts out in the wilds, the randonneur that Abbey or Leopold discuss approximates, in some ways, a flâneur. But his or her boulevards are anywhere the boulders, big cats, brush, box canyons, and backwoods ramble.

To revalorize accumulation without end, however, the recreationist management machine also focuses maximum attractive force to enable each and every **randonneur** to extract maximal full value from whatever wild corner of the global market any **randonné** brings him or her out in the backwoods. Pure ruggedness is then eclipsed by industrial tourism. Planetary urbanization spins up multiple streetscapes. The affordance of multiple alluring angles for photography, paths for easy access, steady bridges over watercourses, and convenient stair steps in the woods as the trail experience gels into a standard package -- leaping waters, spectacular sights meriting millions of photos from lofty perches on the gorge, a dip perhaps in cool churning pools, and then cold drinks at trail's end.

While no single **randonneur** reproduces the same trek down the trail, there is a subtly normalized script for Cascades conduct. No matter the season, photographs valorize, reify, reproduce, and accumulate the benefits of a hike for any and all who venture to this faraway place in these staged spaces. Just as the department store made use of the **flânerie** to sell goods, so too do such recreational sites of the Department of Agriculture's U.S. Forest Service mobilize the **randonneé** to energize the national market.

Randonneurs believe they are intrepid and inventive visitors, viewers or voyagers, but do they only routinely enact their outdoor behavior, black-and-white photo art prints, back-countryness or banal backpacking blogs as buyers of naturalized goods and services? Sited in a world evolving into the Anthropocene amid the materiality of modernity, the Cascades are a striking example of how today's cultural, psychic, social, and technological problems arise "due to wealth, not poverty" (Agger, 2011: viii). The Cascades are studied and situated body work, as Agger asserts has been developed "to combat sedentary lifestyles" or "even finding meaning in our daily existence" (Agger, 2011: viii). Therefore, the **randonneur** remains an ambivalent figure.

Ruination also runs rampant all around the Cascades.[4] Amidst what might seem to be an iconic green anchor point, one must ask if what is experienced here are, as the surrealists would offer, more "revolutionary energies" thrown off the latest "outmoded objects" under the gas greenhouse of citified global environmental management. No longer a realm of raw wild ruggedness, but instead a nationalized recreationist area under 24x7 GPS surveillance, are the Cascades also among "the objects that have begun to be extinct" as they too "fall from favor, slow in circulation or drift into disuse" (Benjamin, 1997: 229)?

With the Arcades, Benjamin pulled those commercial by-ways from their embedded dispositions in the early metropolis, bringing them face-to-face with the early twentieth century's chaotic confrontations of capitalism and communism, prosperity and poverty, progress and stagnation. To shake individuals from the phantasmagoric myth of commodification into a critical alertness, Benjamin illustrates how in ruins, like the Arcades, "history has physically merged into the setting. And, in this guise, history does not assume the form of the process of eternal life so much as that of irresistible decay" (Benjamin, 1977: 177-178).

Desolated, discarded or disused ruins lose their sizzle, while petrifying at the same time traces of times now past, lives once popular now lost, and commercial trends that since have turned another direction. With the Cascades, comparable changes are in motion. The strenuous life, afternoons in the woods, the day on the trail or minutes of wonder at the foot of waterfall -- are these moments also now petrified into the setting? Ruins are the stuff of everyday life going beyond stuff, blown away in bits, virtualized for 24x7 access, and natural wonders are no guarantee of anything special. Indeed, fewer and fewer people willingly leave their mini-vans or modern houses to wander in the woods where they would be without air conditioning or video games.

Out on the trail, one senses strongly "residues of a dream world," which are essential, as Benjamin (1986: 162) asserts, for "the realization of dream elements in waking" as the substance behind,

the textbook example of dialectical thinking. For this reason dialectical thinking is the organ of historical awakening. Each epoch not only dreams the next, but also, in dreaming, strives toward the moment of waking. It bears its end in itself and unfolds it—as Hegel already saw—with ruse. In the convulsions of the commodity economy we begin to recognize the monuments of the bourgeoisie as ruins even before they have crumbled (Benjamin, 1986: 162).

Today, the wilderness and the city are both subjected to ruination. Ruins are essentially a reciprocating cycle of animation and deanimation, excitation and exhaustion, acceleration and deceleration, charging valorization with their preruined and postruined energies. Creative destruction moves along these vectors of value—destructively creating new preruinate sites as well as creatively destroying postruinations at the nexus of exchange.

Benjamin's rueful insights about Paris and the complicated speculations about its decline in his Arcades Project see this couplet as "a symptom of the fact that technology was not accepted," and, at the same time, "these visions bespeak the gloomy awareness that along with the great cities have evolved the means to raze them to the ground" [c 7a, 4] (1999: 97). Anxieties about the wild today parallel this observation. While the first diktat of federal delimitations defining national parks, monuments, and wildernesses can be admired, the coincident policing of their flora and fauna, resettlement of any human occupants, and measured inventory of the natural resources stockpiled therein is a telling marker of planetary urbanization (Keller and Turek, 1998; Spence, 1999; and, Schrepfer, 2005). Despite all the legal protections for the wilds created since Reconstruction, a global economy has evolved the power and will to efface, ignore, or neglect them, if and when needed.

The Cascades track the same rise and fall as the Arcades with their celebratory embrace of the modern materiality. As Benjamin suggests, the Arcades of Paris and so many other major European cities, emerge in the 1820s as centers of fashion-driven mass consumption, and their initial condition of operation is the rise of the textile trade, creating centers of commerce in various luxury goods, which also could be illuminated in vast spaces day-and-night by gas lighting. Their second condition rests on the inception and proliferation of iron as a common building material, bringing new industrial techniques and materiel into architecture at world exhibition, ordinary street blocks, and infrastructural edifices.

Even though all are prompted to regard the Cascades as a green escape to the untouched nature of a wilderness getaway, is the entire site an organized exurban simulation of all the above? The paths to and from are bucolic boulevards often surfaced and/or fenced from the well-organized parking lot to the visitor's destination, namely, the Cascades themselves. Because it is outdoors, one must admit traces of Nature remain: squirrels abound, snakes might be seen, and skunks can be smelled. In so many other respects, however, this government-run park setting is not unlike a mall walk exteriorized, displaced, transposed into other corners of the anthropogenic/anthropocentric/anthroponomic environment.

The spectacle is "natural," but its programmatic substance is normalized conduct organized around the commodified, reified, packaged time/space/materiel/energy commerce to transit to, through, around, and from the Cascades. Particular gear is specified for the engagement: hiking shoes, canteen, Gortex jackets, sunscreen, field glasses, map, fishing rods, camera, picnic lunches, poncho, bathing suits, towel, first-aid kits, guidebook, trash bags, backpack, etc. Those on the Cascades trails are far beyond being merely a **flâneur**, they are playing out the packaged outdoorsy roles of the **randonneur**.

Tourism in an Age of Mechanical Reproduction

Abbey or Leopold could unlock the core of industrial tourism from a cryptic sentence—as recorded by Benjamin—in Jacques de Lacretelle's "Le Revéur Parisien" from Nouvelle Revue Française (1927) which states: "for our type of man, train stations are truly factories of dreams" (Benjamin, 1999: 849). While this observation is true in many ways for multiple reasons, the industrial tourist feared by Abbey, when boarding the train to the Yukon, Yosemite, or the Yellowstone, has been indeed well-trained. Each line of flight stations them to coproduce his or her dreams of natural destinations, panoramic experiences, or unnatural speedy transit to through, and for the domination of Nature via personal embeddedness of iron infrastructures, photographic stylization, and constructed cascades in the Earth as vast velodrome. With the automobile, airplane, motorcycle, motorboat, snowmobile or jet ski, any landscape soon becomes a mechanized autorama for a wheel-borne tourist consciousness in the latest style and form of each industrial tourist's dreams.

Gripped by a site-specific script of green conduct, the dictates of this special discipline express another moment

of everyday governmentality. The well-concealed panorama, the rescued fauna, the endangered flora, and the preserved wilds spin together around the Cascades. Its photographic images in alliance with the stupefied multitude, as Baudelaire once feared, are let fly for they can "hasten to enrich the tourist's album and restore to his eye the precision which his memory may lack" just as it already has been let to "adorn the naturalist's library, and enlarge microscopic animals" (cited in Benjamin, 1999: G92).

Ironically, such cascadification in global citification also fuses together Louis Daguerre's two great inventions: the dioramic spectacle and industrialized photography. As an industrial tourist, the visitor/viewer/voyager is freed from sitting in a small amphitheater to witness staged light shows, staged plays of days, and unreal flights of time. Cascadification in some respects daguerreotypes the masses with new plated folkways for an outdoor recreational public. Most nature preserves are amphitheatrical, the stage always is shifting, and the lights of photographic apprehension vary. The well-designed lines of rapid transit through these urbanaturalized sites nicely exhaust the multiplicity of energies powering industrial tourism. As Benjamin records, an account of such daguerreotyped experience -- it is, like Nature is still believed to be, "great and small, splendid, secret, and terrifying" (cited in Benjamin, 1999: 690). The sublime, as one seeks to see dialectics, slips into service, fills a wrapper, settles into a container or fills packaging suited for the wild put to work in an age of mechanical reproduction.

Benjamin speculated the great Parisian panoramas were efforts to perfectly imitate Nature. With scaffoldings of iron, light, and entertainment transpose in the wilds and woods "a thousand configurations of life, from enduring edifices to passing fashions" what is the systemic secret cue, or "the advent of machines" (Benjamin, 1999: 4-5). In one conjuncture, photography, panoramas, and proletarianization produces deceptively industrialized changes in the physical landscapes of the Earth itself as enduring edifices for the **randonneur** to explore in search of the wild. Where once, as Benjamin claims, "one sought tirelessly, through technical devices, to make panoramas the scenes of a perfect imitation of nature" (1999:5) in the era of the Arcades, the era of the Cascades finds technical devices used continuously to perfect the accessibility and convenience of everyday industrial life in the material settings of wilds, woods, and waters. Stabilized as predictable panoramic packages for repeated use, as Leopold suggests, these engineered experiences are accepted as living in harmony with Nature, an authentic trophy of contact with the wilds, or sublime outdoor leisure. Nonetheless, as the Cascades web page hints, "a few ghosts of the old trail remain -- stone steps that survive the flood but now lead nowhere." These are manufactured trails one must tread to realize what is afoot here.

As the department store served as "the last promenade for the **flâneur**," where all "his fantasies were materialized" beyond the Arcades of Paris, one finds beyond Pearisburg in the Cascades how the Department of Agriculture opens up promenades for the **randonneur** and his/her industrial tourism where the skills of a **flâneur** "that began as art of the private individual ends today as necessity for the masses" (Benjamin, 1999: 895). Again, seeing dialectics here, such "exhibitions of the natural world "truly" propagate the universe of commodities" (Benjamin, 1999: 894) now proliferating as Planet Earth in the Anthropocene.

The dream world of the Cascades is not unlike that of the Arcades, even though they vary in time, place, mission, and pace. Under the gas greenhouse, this swath of Nature itself is little more than a commodity -- both as the packaged wilds and the processed past -- brought together in bureaucratic ruination by behavioral policing, educational direction, and environmental agitation. The citification of the country, the deruralization of the woods, the deanimation of wildlife, and the denaturalization of the outdoors reeks from the detrital deposits of constant weeding, brush clearing, animal trapping, tree pruning, trail surfacing, car-park policing, and boundary marking. The green governmentality in "Hiking to the Cascades" is a frozen freedom loaded with determinate mission requirements: no littering, take lots of photos, no leafleting, walk on the right, no smoking, stay on the trail, no drugs, watch out for dogs/children/wheelchairs, no alcohol, keep your clothes on, no fires, careful swimming, no rock climbing, never go to the top of the falls, no loud music, converse with strangers, no shooting, lower your voices, no rock throwing, do not remove anything from the park, no soliciting, leash your dog, no loitering, and, finally, of course, to each and every hiker "please enjoy your visit."

Here one recognizes the activities enjoyed at the Cascades by the dreaming collective, which knows no history, and accepts the apparent permanence of the wilds as both "the eternal return of the same" as well as "the sensation of the newest and most modern" efforts at wilderness preservation. To paraphrase Benjamin, the sense of space that parallel this perception of time is "the interpenetrating and superposed transparency of the world" trodden by the **randonneur** (Benjamin, 1999: 546). Most expect the wilderness at work in the age of mechanical reproduction to remain "always the same" to betoken the enduring qualities of the biosphere, while in coincident happenstance bureaucratic machinery develops a secure and stable "same as always" quality-controlled mechanical reproducibility

in the outdoors experience being commodified.

Many days, then, the Cascades trail is choked with foot traffic as each **randonneur** remains intent on that perfect photograph, pleasant picnic or personal-best powerwalk. The oppressive openness of the outdoor recreationists' conduct of conduct charges the air with wish images of a hike in the woods that reconnects them as hikers with their historical heritage, need for the natural or love for life. Yet, there is a heavy sense of ruination, loss, and obsolescence as the gaggles of government guests march through this exurbanized outside turned suburbanized inside. The walls are invisible but real, the ceiling is unseen but dropping, the floor is rugged but manufactured, the doors are open but limited, and the windows are many but mostly closed. Through them, does one only see to the same wish-images, dream-pictures, fantasy-views of a deadening liberal democratic government service and horrendous industrial capitalist commodity: the nature preserve. [5]

The cascadification of arresting sites in the countryside express "images in the collective consciousness in which the old and new interpenetrate" by deflecting the imagination of all this is new, like urban industrial society, with strange "images of its successor, the latter appears wedded to elements of primal history <Urgeschichte> -- that, to elements of a classless society" (Benjamin, 1999: 4). Similarly, the frontier fellowship of all America expanding ever outward in fulfillment of its Manifest Destiny seemingly restores the rich classless fantasy of liberty, equality, and fraternity on the trails in the woods. It has taken many decades, but the fetish character of capitalism envelops the spatiality of the Cascades as well as the Arcades. They both concretize "the anticipation and imaginative expression of a new world" (Benjamin, 1999: 637,) congealing in the environmentalization of the planet.

Even though it is not a city, not a building, and not inside, the Cascades constitute a type of full-blown capitalist interior design, crystallizing its built environments in a micrology of the planet's overall citification as a macrology. Since this state park/national forest seems dream-like, do its fixtures, flows, and features express key characteristics of contemporary cultural, economic, and social structures standing ready to be deciphered by seeing dialectics? The dream worlds of the Cascades with all their layered traces plausibly are as rich and ragged as the dream worlds of the Arcades. As the web page asserts, "it takes four bridges and innumerable stone steps and walkways to give visitors this experience." One need not only investigate the major metropolis as a "landscape of noisy life" (Benjamin, 1982: 1056) to experience the shocks of modernity. Few cityscapes reconfigured for quiet leisure can disclose as much about the marginalization, fragmentation, and organization of late capitalist experiences as these meandering paths on the trail to the Cascades. If one engages in seeing dialectics, then the striding **randonneur** will reveal as much as a wandering **flâneur**. The allegedly wild, in fact, offers faint hope for any escape from the reified repetition of fetishized commodification.[6]

The green utopian aspirations of state parks are as riddled with the same modes of betrayal found in metropolitan centers: the relentless repetition of experience swirling about as a mystified "newness." Each hike to the Cascades, every visit to a bevy of state parks, all contact with the dazzling array of outdoors excitements are but another phantasmagoric commodity. Novelty is not truly "newness" in some genuine regard. It is only different variegated unconscious sense of "newness" out on sale at many elsewheres or otherdays. Consequently, the Cascades express in their own articulations "that which is 'always-again-the-same'," (Benjamin, 1982: 1038), with their entangled mythological joys and disappointments, promises and betrayals, escapes and endlessnesses.[7]

Intriguingly, cascadification near Pearisburg, and elsewhere in many other American landscapes, emerges out of the same vertiginous characteristics of the nineteenth century, after industrial machines leave their imprints on private and public individual existences. The Cascades are an "illumination" not only in a theoretical manner, by an ideological transposition, but also in "the immediacy of their perceptible presence" (Benjamin, 1999: 14) since they appear to coast among the mobilization of people and things beyond cities where machines made their advent. Their citification comes as the market colonizes the countryside as well, and, arguably, more so as these exploding centers of commodification draw down the stocks of Nature.[8]

Cascadification, then, congeals multiple phantasmagoria of industrial-era ecotectures, interpolating grand staircases in hillsides with stone, spanning cataracts and canyons with timber and rope bridges, and reconfiguring the terrains of the wilds into stylized built environments. As sites worthy of preservation for consumption via mass movements of visitors, viewers, and voyagers in Paris, the anthropogenic dammed, farmed, mined, timbered, or ranched spaces of the countryside around Pearisburg capture the same dynamics. Here, the "always the same" must be visited and viewed frequently on millions of voyages to sustain all these occluded developments with affirmations of "same as always."

Both cascadification and arcadification can be quickly turned into the detritus of history, in which the half-concealed traces of daily life for "the collective" can be reviewed with "the methods of the nineteenth-century

collector of antiquities and curiosities" (Eiland and McLaughlin in Benjamin, 1999: ix). It is the work of the wild, in part, to circulate continuously as tokens of the Earth's antiquity as well as curios of its ever-evolving biota. Therein lies for many the lure of wilds, the mystery of the woods, the tranquility of waters.

The iron architectures of industrial tourism turned city and country inside out as arcadification fuses with cascadification. Where many once visited panoramic displays in cities of nature's wonders, the diorama attains displaced purity in natural settings. As Benjamin (1999: 530) archly observes, "in the same year in which Daguerre invented photography, his diorama burned out. 1839." A walk down the streets of Paris or up the trails outside Pearisburg, becomes a voyage to, though, and for the enjoyments of a transposed dioramic experience. Prior photographs, which have illuminated these passage ways, in turn, affirm "the fact that film today articulates all problems of modern form-giving—understood as questions of its own technical existence" (Benjamin, 1999: 530), since the Cascades' many destinations—hiking trails, stone steps, scenic overlooks, and camping grounds all are experimental panels of an embedded dioramic consciousness **in concreto** open for continuous reaffirmation as "points of (photographic) interest." Cascadification is another material manifestation of the "historical and dialectical relation between diorama and photography" (Benjamin, 1999: 848).

This era of art dawns decades after the Arcades' hey-day when the Cascades' designs capture a glow from **Jugenstil**—the modern decorative styles collectively clustered with the Second Industrial Revolution -- as various new "youth" or "modern" fashions recur in the Art Nouveau, Arts and Crafts, Mission, Stil Mucha or other organic design articulations. In its most perverse reactionary form, it can appear as Futurism, Art Moderne or even Suprematism, but these expressions remain a "reactionary attempt to sever technologically constituted forms from their functional contexts and turn them into natural constants -- that is, to stylize them" (Benjamin, 1999: 558). Cascadification brims with dioramic, symbolic, and iconic stylizations as one recognizes during these material transformations how "the bourgeoisie begins to come to terms with the conditions—not yet, to be sure, of its social domination—but of domination over nature" (Benjamin, 1999: 558).

The collective dream life of capitalist cultivators is drawn to the Cascades, because when they are most awake many among the masses tend to value only the tillable utility of land. One can also witness this shift in Giles County by seeing dialectics.[9] As Leopold notes, there is a culture of "clean farming" across the USA in which ignorant croppers ask, "what good is it" (Leopold, 1966: 190) of native fauna and flora without seeing their harmonious coexistence within the whole land organism. The same can be said of clean ranching, building or settling. When he asks, "if the biota, in the course of aeons, has built something we like but do not understand, then who but a fool would discard seemingly useless parts" (Leopold, 1966: 190). In turn, the citifying engines of corporate agriculture, town planning, and extractive commerce with planetary urbanization prove themselves to be the trades of fools.

Leopold's walks typify those to be taken by the land-ethical citizen. On these wanderings in rural Wisconsin, he exults in having "all the acres I can walk over," when he checks up on his coinhabitants—the oriole, the wren, thrasher, blue bird, cardinal, towhee as well as the mink, raccoon, bobcat, rabbit, skunk—as "we sally forth, the dog and I, at random" (Leopold, 1966: 44, 46). He saunters down creek beds, hikes up sand hills, treks through pine lots, and trudges through snow banks. Whether hiking after grouse, partridge or goose, Leopold and his dog meander across the land on their **randonné** through its ruination. At the same time, he laments the invasions of starlings, Russian thistles, carp, and cheat grass in the American West, Leopold feels loss in those derelict ruins of the land. On his hikes, he finds "the hopeless attitude almost universal. There is, as yet, no sense of pride in the husbandry of wild plants and animals, no sense of shape in the proprietorship of a sick landscape. We tilt at windmills in behalf of conservation in convention halls and editorial offices, but on the back forty we disclaim even owning a lance" (Leopold, 1966: 168).

Cascadification expresses a hard parsing of this chaos as "land" slips into stark styles of economic exploitation, while "country" remains indirectly less exploited but nonetheless abstract, reified, and manufactured essentially under other mystified conditions of production. Leopold (1966: 177) distinguishes them:

> Land is the place where corn, gullies, and mortgages grow. Country is the personality of land, the collective harmony of its soil, life, and weather. Country knows no mortgages, no alphabetical agencies, not tobacco road; it is calmly aloof to these petty exigencies of its alleged owners. ... Poor land may be rich country, and vice versa.

Leopold's small Sauk County family spread of 120 prairie acres in Wisconsin, as he records, was once quite extraordinary. Up until about 1840, it had basically soils, fauna, and flora identical to those going back to the last ice age 12,000 years ago. As rich country, the animals, plants, soils, and microorganisms thrived there through twelve millennia "of living and dying, burning and growing, preying and fleeing, freezing and thawing, built that dark and

bloody ground we call prairie" (Leopold, 1999: 193).

Around 1840, sod-busting wheat farmers and private owners pushing west brought the rapacious constructs of "land" in their eagerly engineered "clean farming" to the prairie's "country." Within two generations, Sauk County decayed into the detritus of development. As only some patches become "good land," much of the prairie deteriorated into "poor country," which now suffers erosion, alien species, desiccation, engineered infrastructures and, finally, educated landscaping. The hyperurbanizing experts and engineers intent upon extracting the maximum crop yields from their new-found lands, as Leopold complains,

> killed off the prairie fauna and they drove the flora to the last refuge of railroad embankments and roadsides. To our engineers this flora is merely weeds and brush; they ply it with grader and mower. ...The prairie garden becomes a refuge for quack grass. After the garden is gone, the highway department employs landscapers to dot the quack with elms, and with artistic clumps of Scotch pine, Japan Barberry, and Spiraea. Conservation Committees, en route to some important convention, whiz by and applaud this zeal for roadside beauty (1966: 193).

The urban must recast the Earth as citified land and country with neither spatiality being ultimately at peace. With this "wholesale artificialization of the landscape" (Leopold, 1966: 200), the gas greenhouse grows apace. Fossil fuel-sourced fertilizer, pesticide, herbicide and energy inputs simply accelerate "clean farming."

Cascadification takes hold here and there, and "what remains of our native fauna and flora remains only because agriculture has not got around to destroying it. The present ideal of agriculture is commodification: "clean farming means a food chain aimed solely at economic profit and purged of all non-conforming links, a sort of *Pax Germanica* of the agricultural world" (Leopold, 1966: 199). All around the Cascades, clean farming also gained control in Giles County, leaving ruins and remnants of good country popping out only here and there. As Leopold (1966: 125) frets on his "Illinois Bus Ride," all that clean farmers have done is "make Illinois safe for soybeans," so he stares out the bus windows at troubling signs of other times and places: "in the narrow thread of sod between the shaved bands and toppling fences grow the relics of what once was Illinois: the prairie. No one in the bus sees these relics." As with the prairie, so too is it with the Appalachian Highlands. Once the urbanizers capture country space, they create vast tracts of "land" on the prairies and in the highlands. Giles County also is full of "good land" for clean farming, but many fewer parts of it are left as "good country," even around the Cascades.

As Benjamin might note, the Cascades mark yet another reinvention of industrial society. Now greenhouse gas-roofed, their apparently unsullied expanses extend everywhere beyond, behind, beneath or beside the world's industrial environment of buildings. Their owners, managers, and residents might hold them, separate and apart, from the built environments fabricated by the human agents at work in all forms of clean building, farming, ranching or settling as the never-to-be-built, yet-to-be-built or once-built environment. This only cloaks them in claddings of the wild, the big outside or maybe Nature. As sites, stocks and services, the Cascades are a non-city. Yet, as citified and deruralized space in which multiple users seek to find everything they need, the Cascades capture the citified spectacular and sublime, lit from above through the gas greenhouse that the Earth's global commerce produces.

Conclusion: Seeing Dialectics

Even though green politicos and environmental thinkers still represent the deserts and mountains as America's last wilderness, the sheer numbers of campers/climbers/hikers/trekkers clambering around their peaks and valleys for decades already are the best sign of "the wilderness" becoming thoroughly mangled with "the urban"? This experimental mapping of Benjamin's Passagen-Werk into a critique of the countryside's citification shows how the great urban boulevards rise at the same time in modernity as the rarest grand buttes get identified as worth the hike. Like the Arcades, the Cascades are turned old, out, and over in markets as their unnamed natural vitality is engineering away in planning and packaging.

Whether as peaks or prairies, "national legislation removed native and pastoral peoples and designated the heights as sites of recreational use, scientific study, and aesthetic inspiration" (Schrepfer, 2005: 2) to pound out "nature preserves." Romantic souls want wilderness to be desolate, remote, threatening, and mysterious, but do the rising tides of recreationists coming by the hundreds, thousands, and then millions only want to consume other varieties of fabricated exurbanization? Cutting primitive paths through the pines essentially builds bucolic boulevards out into the boondocks for a subjectivity not unlike a **flâneur**. And, the ways of Abbey's or Leopold's **randonneur**

are just celebrating other stylized engagements with sport, leisure, and entertainment not unknown on many big city streets.[10]

Ruggedizing, wildernessing, preserving or parking these spaces all requires complex manufactured spatiality. The Cascades are, like the Arcades, by-passed, worked-round, and passed-over domains. Prevented from being always submitted to constant extractive uses, they are made busy and quiet at the same time as attractive industry sites. As buttes and boulders become but just another by-pass or boulevard, the citification of space proceeds along with the commodification of pace and place in Nature.

As Agger's fast capitalist critique of late capitalist cultural representation affirms, many unrecognized kinds of identity, if not unity, flow together at sites like the Cascades. When Benjamin observes, "the property appertaining to the commodity as its fetish character attaches as well to the commodity -- producing society as it represents itself and thing to understand itself" (Benjamin, 1999: 669), he anticipates how the age of ecological decline will manifest itself in the Anthropocene. Benjamin and Leopold disclose how and why capitalist exchange is far from natural, but it is not yet wholly artificial. Its "natural history" petrifies today in "ecological modernization." For such sustainable development schema, the daily drift of materiel makes its meaning, the weekly whirl of exchange is its system, the monthly calculus of commerce generates its service, and the yearly account of ruination is its artifact.

Endnotes

1. Benjamin surveyed nineteenth century industrial cultures as they took their form around Paris. One today, however, must review late twentieth and early twenty-first century industrial culture as it has taken form in the planet itself. Indeed, seeing dialectics should scan carefully seriously the debris of mass culture from both the city and country, indoors and outdoors, boulevards and trails, machines and markets as their coevolutionary urbanaturalization become more apparent with each passing year. How the planet itself is choking everywhere on the debris of mass culture -- from the gasses fabricating an evermore greenhoused planet to the sprawling shanty-towns reconstructing the Earth as a planet of slums to the tangles of man-made plastic detritus stretching for miles and miles in mobile marine marshes of garbage that swirl around mid-ocean the world's seas. Like Benjamin's Passagen-Werk, which aspired to become "a materialist philosophy of history: rooted in "the utmost concreteness" (cited in Buck-Morss, 1989: Benjamin, 1982/1929), can this exercise continue that project on considerably different and more contemporary, but still parallel and quite critical, lines of critique?

2. The parallels between an arcade and a cascade are enthralling. An "arcade" is a series of arches forming a gallery, which can be erected for decorative purposes or to create a roofed passage way lined with shops such as those studied by Benjamin. Coming to English as "arcade" from French via the Italian "arcata," it goes back to Latin's "arcus" -- "arch" or "bow." In turn, a "cascade" is a series of waterfalls, or a grand deluge of dropping water, chemicals, lace, events or any successive advance of stages, processes, activities. Also coming to English from French, it arrives via the Italian "cascata" from a verb "cascare" -- to fall in Latin, or "cadere." One must tend, however, the word root -- "-cade," which also

implies via its French, Italian and Vulgar Latin origins "flowing," "rolling," or "falling" in fluid stages. Like an industrial process, divided labor united in final product, the flight of goods and services to buyers and sellers, does modernity bond them together in arcades and cascades. Whether citified or countrified, reification erodes away the solidities of once might have been "lifeworld" in the streams of what are now the flows of "system."

3. The east slopes drain into the Atlantic via the James River and the Chesapeake Bay, while the waters coming west down from Mountain Lake through Little Stony Run over the Cascades waterfall flow into the New River that ultimately joins the Ohio River, then the Mississippi, and eventually the Gulf of Mexico. What Benjamin had with Paris in the Old World at the core of urbanized Europe, here one has outside Pearisburg, Virginia in the New World near a U.S. government-designated wilderness high in the Appalachian Mountains in one of Virginia's least populated and less prosperous counties (per capita income in 2000 was $18,396 for 16,657 people in 360 square miles). Remote, rugged, and rural, it also is, nonetheless, quite denaturalized. Citified, organized, policed, reified, and packaged in nearly invisibilized fashions, Cascade Falls closely parallel the Arcades, which arose in the Old World in Paris amidst the urban, national, and industrial revolutionization of France.

4. The lands around Cascade Falls rose out of the Earth's seas towards the close of the Mississippian Age eons ago. Largely limestone, millennia of winds, glaciations, and floods have eroded away over a mile of material off these parts as the Appalachians aged. While Native American settlements go back over 10,000 years, all that is left are stray artifacts, lost

settlements, and many burial sites. European explorers made contact with the indigenous nations, and one of the first signs of subsequent European pioneering is a marker in Glen Lyn that records: "Mary Porter killed by the Indians November 28, 1742." At the small village of Eggleston, which is not far from where Big Stony Creek runs into the New River, Adam Harmon founded this first permanent, and still existing, town in 1745. Named after William Branch Giles, one of Virginia's first Congressmen (1790-1815), and then Governor of the Commonwealth (1827-1831), the county has been sliced and diced multiple times in annexations and removals from 1806 to 1861 when it became a border jurisdiction butted against the breakaway state of West Virginia in the Civil War. Played out mines, abandoned farms, stone building ruins, lost villages, forgotten Confederate forts, closed factories, abandoned stone quarries, overgrown roads, and dying Appalachian crossroads dot the landscape. So amidst these ruins, those still remaining, or just visiting, all are caught up in today's global economy in new, and often, more tentative ties that depend upon recreationists, retirees, and realtors to boost the isolated county's flagging fortunes by tinkering around the Cascades.

5. Often as canned as any stale sit-com, as organized as any prison-yard break, as scripted as any TV infomercial, as controlled as any shackled jail inmate headed to court, the once "Big Outside" is now a much cozier miniature "insidified-outside." So too are outdoor recreationists entangled by indoor routines all reproducing the reifications of industrial capitalist commodification within invisible walls. The Giles County web page assures all for scenes that are "both breathtaking and beautiful" with "both power and beauty," it is vital that "the falls are also fairly easy to view." Such are the fearsome features on the face that so many now celebrate as "sustainable development." In fact, it might only be the latest of highest stage of global and local cosmetic surgeries on the visage of accumulation without end. If one hopes, like Benjamin, is to be a "physiognomist" of capitalism in today's greenhoused global environments where clues for scrutinizing social life must be deciphered from the materiality, structure, and disposition of buildings themselves, as Benjamin aspired to do with the Parisian Arcades, then comparable opportunities await one at these Appalachian Cascades. For an up-to-date feel to this approach toward the spectacularization of nature in which the narratives advance to the point of bringing the viewer from anywhere to the site itself, see: http://virginiasmtnplayground.com/cascades/

6. Putting a mild Heideggerian spin on the question might help. Does the randonneur come to the Cascades trail in the spirit of Gelassenheit able to enjoy some full "letting-be"? Or is the randonné upon which so many are launched to finish at the Cascades express the programmatic agenda of "system" rather than "lifeworld"? Perhaps "the worlding of the world" here is already one of environmentality? On the one hand, does one find that Das Welt weltet? Or instead does Das Umwelt umweltet in the disciplinary grids of a green Gleichschaltung? The trails out to the Cascades perhaps

are all standing reserves whose technics are embedded in the reproduction of accumulation without end (Heidegger, 1962, and, Heidegger, 1977)? Their artful engineering embedded in the Earth express the dynamic unfolding package of industrial tourism: its openness is constrained, its relationality is narrow, its worldness is processed, and expansive governmentality is fully mapped out by the reproduction of wilds in an age of mechanical work. The worlding of the world is already always here and there, but is its finite being framed in the processed, packaged, programmed spatialities of a full-blown gas greenhouse?

7. Benjamin argued the "link to the entertainment industry is significant" (1999: 14). Arcadification, then, mobilizes entertainment along with multiple visions of its enjoyment for "the advent of machines" (Benjamin, 1999: 16). This mode of productive force deployment Benjamin reconnects to the "History of Civilization" keyed to "humanity's life forms and creations" in manners that enable him "to show how, because of this reifying representation of civilization, the new forms of behavior and the new economically and technologically based creations that we owe to the nineteenth century enter the universe of a phantasmagoria" (Benjamin, 1999: 14).

8. Again, reasoning along parallel lines, there is within a generation or two—say beginning in earnest with the Third Republic in France or just after the close of Reconstruction in the U.S.A.—a boom in the mass-market tourist trade made possible by iron railroads, iron steamships, and iron infrastructures. Getting to the Cascades is key, and their reconstitution as individual passages, voyages, adventures brings out "the world at large" rather than in miniature. The Cascades are, in turn, major expressions of industrial lighting of a new kind—photography. Its illumination, reproduction, celebration in endless panoramas lit old natural sites in a new mechanical sight. Yet, the infiltration of iron, steel, and concrete into the city and country brought a new aesthetics of authenticity tied to timber, stone or rope on the terrain itself.

9. Many well-intentioned thinkers sing high praises to "the dreams of the Earth" (Berry, 1989); but, the latest contrivances for sustainable development on Earth as a gas greenhouse indicate that one must be cautious here. When remembering such dreams on the trails to the Cascades, are those dreamers of Earth in today's capitalist collective striding back and forth to the Cascades, like those strolling through the Arcades, simply to be enthralled in today's new dream worlds of accumulation without end? Their peculiar collective unconsciousness perhaps reveals what Buck-Morss sees as a double sense of unawareness: "on the one hand, because of its distracted dreaming state, and on the other, because it was unconscious of itself, composed of atomized individuals, consumers who imagined their commodity dream-world to be uniquely personal (despite all objective evidence to the contrary) and who experienced their membership in the collective only in an isolated, alienating sense, as an anonymous

component of the crowd" (1989: 260).

10. For trekkers on this faraway trail in Giles County, Virginia, do they revel in their dreamy experiences, and are they perhaps only as promising, unique personal, and universal as many meanderings through some major suburban megamall closer to home? For the masses, the leisure market, or the hiking public composing the great society of bureaucratically-controlled consumption, the promised sublime of natural settings drains away in the systematicity of artificial spatialities. Without constant commodification, all the way down and around the world, once surrounded within a "designated recreation area," it is soon the case that as "the rebus image of the commodity," even these sylvan hollows and rushing streams are "the always-again-the-same in great masses" (Benjamin, 1982: 429), since the best surprise for these consumers is that there is no surprise.

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Toward a Theory of Economic Development as a Mode of Flash Capitalism

Robert Kirsch

Introduction

This article takes up the concept of "flash capitalism" (Agger & Luke, 2015). As the slow, uneven recovery of the Great Financial Crisis continues, the fact that almost a decade later things are not yet back to "normal" has spawned some handwringing texts by mainstream economists who admit that perhaps all is not well in market society. Piketty's Capital in the Twenty-First Century served as the touchstone of a kind of literature that admitted that widening inequality was a problem in market society, but that some fine-tuning by the federal government could lessen it, restoring some kind of balance between economic growth and the return on capital investment.[1] Agger and Luke argue that Piketty's text confirms capitalism cannot sustain itself under the weight of its internal contradictions, but relies on a **deus ex machina** of the visible hand of the state to step in and turn things around (Agger & Luke, 2015, p. 344). They refer to this pivot of diagnosing the ills of capitalism while giving an easily digestible solution that does not transcend capitalism as "blockbuster Marxism." Blockbuster Marxism is not a Marxism that seeks to dialectically transcend capitalism through class struggle in order to establish a free association of workers, but an uncritical (and indeed unspoken Marxism since Piketty and his ilk eschew the term) one in which thoughtful economists realize that perhaps there is a need for the state after all, especially in an era of quick turnover in flash capitalism, where financial loci of buying and selling are untethered from sites of material production, and where speeds of trades are measured in nanoseconds.

This article is a contribution on just how the state becomes visible, where it intervenes, how it intervenes, and to what end in such a regime of flash capitalism. First, a theoretical treatment of the state shows that from Piketty to Minsky, an immanent analysis of the role of the state establishes the underpinnings for the fast and sustained role of state financial intervention in flash capitalism. As a case to show such a role of the state as catalyst of flash capitalism, the next section is an analysis of the United States' Economic Development Administration (EDA). This will be used to show how the state, far from wisely intervening as an external agent to alleviate the periodic crises that result from the ebullience in market society, rather accelerates the cycle of crises. It encourages speculative investment of public funds, and establishes its role as persistent infuser of capital as a necessity pillar of what is often referred to as economic development. The first part deals with the role of the state in orthodox market society, then overlaying the notion of flash capitalism to make more sense of why the state is such an active agent in economic development. The second part takes up the structure of the EDA, in particular how it carves up the United States into Economic Development Districts (EDD), and through the use of annual comprehensive economic development strategies (CEDS) documents, intertwine a reliance on state investment, and maintains that investment in a speculative manner, serving mostly business interests. The final section looks at the 2016 CEDS document of the Central Arizona Governments to see how their investment strategies are geared to be speculative toward business interests, especially the financial churn of the financial presence of Maricopa County, and how there is little evidence that EDA investment achieves its goals of building better communities. The final analysis shows

that flash capitalism is an appropriate theoretical lens to view EDA intervention into EDD and CEDS funding; one that does not assume the wise intervention of liberal economists like Piketty and Minsky for good governance, but as the logical conclusion of a speculative churn where the intense speed of financial turnover entices businesses and economic development regions alike to attempt to strike it rich.

The Role of the State in Flash Capitalism

Before assessing what the state looks like in flash capitalism, it is important to get a sense of what the economic orthodoxy considers the ontological and practical role of the state. As discussed above, Piketty's supposedly provocative conclusion is that the state should levy some kind of wealth tax to reduce inequality in order to bring it closer in relation to the overall rate of economic growth. How this is to be accomplished is not discussed, except to note that it is difficult, and "…requires a high level of international cooperation and regional political integration," adding the speculative punch that we should "…bet everything on democracy" (Piketty, 2014, p. 573). Apparently even a somber commitment to a mode of government is best conceived of in speculative terms.

It is perhaps a peculiarity of economics as a discipline that treats the state as an opaque monolith with an on/off switch, whose job it is to wait in the wings until things become sufficiently degraded to step in and force cooperation and integration at an inter- and subnational level, to say nothing of some of the classical and neoclassical theories that have no conception of the role of the state at all. Again using Piketty as an example, his text talks about "the state" in numerous places in many predictable ways, such as the welfare state of post-World War II and the Thatcher/Reagan state of deregulation afterward. But in the latter half of the book, he makes a shift to discuss the "social state," which is apparently when the state pursues the kinds of programs with its revenues of which Piketty approves (Piketty, 2014, p. 477). Agger and Luke point out that this is more than just analytical ambiguity, but an attempt to dance around the baggage of the caricature of his own making that is state socialism (2015, p. 344). This unwillingness to engage in the existing historical alternatives to capitalism is most likely what propelled Piketty to his celebrity status, even if it amounts to nothing more than a vague plea for an interventionist state with a human face. It walks the tightrope of pointing out the grave ills of market society while simultaneously calling for a minor tweak in the fiscal policy as a solution to those same grave ills. This uncritical critique is "blockbuster Marxism," that does not investigate the internal contradictions of market society (2015). In other words, Piketty seems to dream of a state that does its job as an external fixer, but just a little bit better.

The idea that the state exists as an external salve that can swoop in and save the day when things go haywire is a relatively common position in economics discourse, and most discussions of state activity revolve around when and how much the state should intervene, not whether it should at all. While Piketty does not mention Minsky by name in his blockbuster, Minsky's positioning of the state as the visible hand that undoes the damage of the invisible hand of the market fits in nicely with a vision of the role of the state as what Minsky called the "lender of last resort" (Minsky, 2008). Minsky's analysis here will serve as a bridge between Piketty's blockbuster Marxism of the social state, and Agger and Luke's theory from a Marxist perspective of flash capitalism. The basis of this bridge is in Minsky's "Financial Instability Hypothesis" (FIH) that establishes financial instability and state response as an endogenous process of capital accumulation. This is contrary to more mainstream economic theories of state intervention in market society, but Minsky saw that (perhaps in part because of his time as a student of Joseph Schumpeter) the state did not simply step in to mop up the financial messes of market society when some exogenous shock caused a recession. Instead, he saw financial fragility as an endogenously created phenomenon, under the notion that "stability is destabilizing" (Minsky, 2008, p. xii). That is, the relative calm of stable accumulation encourages economic actors to take risks that will ultimately destabilize the financial system and require state intervention; that this is a general condition of accumulation in financial capitalism.

The FIH posits two premises: "Capitalist market mechanisms cannot lead to a sustained, stable-priced, full-employment equilibrium," and "Serious business cycles are due to financial attributes that are essential to capitalism" (Minsky, 2008, p. 194). These postulates clearly make room for the state to intervene where the market cannot fulfill certain objectives, such as full employment. The unravelling of a stable financial system to an unstable one, according to the FIH, is as follows: A period of what Minsky calls "hedge finance" is the most stable, where firms have enough cash on hand to meet its payment obligations, and keeps assets on the side in case of a market downturn (Minsky, 2008, p. 372). The conditions of hedge finance create a level of confidence for investors that leads to the next stage,

"speculative finance." Investments are routinely valorized, and firms are emboldened to seek higher returns in riskier investments. The hallmark of speculative finance is that firms do not necessarily have the cash on hand to meet their payment obligations, but loans are easy to get, because confidence runs high and interest rates are low (Minsky, 2008, p. 373). Eventually, the confidence wears off, and lenders start calling in their loans, either because of a decrease of confidence in the ability of firms to repay, or because Federal Reserve interest rates are increasing. Firms, without the cash on hand to meet their obligations, go further into debt to service the debt they already have. Minsky refers to this stage of instability as "Ponzi finance" (Minsky, 2008, p. 377). Much like the fraud for which it is named, this stage of financial instability is characterized by firms using fresh cash from new investors to fulfill their payment obligations to their older investors. Eventually, new investors wise up and stop lending, and firms are unable to meet their payment obligations. An example from the Great Financial Crisis is the commercial paper freeze-up, leaving many firms unable to meet any of their payment obligations, even payroll. At this point, Minsky argues that only the state has the fiscal capacity to step in and make firms whole again. But instead of reestablishing a new equilibrium to be maintained, Minsky argues this simply starts the cycle over again; when the state props up asset prices to maintain profits, that gets the economy back to a hedge position, but it does not stop the process whereby instability emerges. Eventually the new hedge finance will encourage speculation.

The insight about the instability of capitalism and the role of the state as salve for as well as cause of that instability gave Minsky his own moment of fame in the immediate aftermath of the Great Financial Crisis, even if his moment was nothing like Piketty's. However, there is a compelling logic to Minsky's argument: after the disaster of a non-intervening state in the Great Depression (and the numerous crunches, crises, and crashes before), the state's involvement in and after World War II set up a stable capitalism, but Minsky understood the cyclical dynamism of financial capitalism. Minsky chides those who think that this postwar capitalism is an ideal standard to which we must attempt to return and then freeze in place. He notes only that while the period of 1945-1965 was the best-performing example of financial capitalism, it was only a "practical best" that set the stage for further instability (Minsky, 1993, p. 3). That further instability began emerging around the mid-1960s when bank rescues became increasingly common, and more financial actors needed state intervention to sustain business profits and ward off recession (Minsky, 1982). With subsequent crises in the energy sector in the 1970s, and increasing fragility of the Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate (FIRE) sector of the economy in the 1980s and early 1990s, the stability from the practical best provided the grounds for a sprawling instability in the economy more broadly. The duration, location, and frequency of state intervention have all ramped up since the end of this practical best, and the economic sectors that receive state intervention to prop up profits then operate under the assumption that the state will bail them out, making the restored financial stability, once again, unstable (Minsky, 1982, p. 194). Such a result intensifies and compresses the cycles of financial instability. Minsky's diagnosis is that such instability, being inherent to a capitalist economy, can only be constrained by the Federal Reserve's ability to set floors and ceilings on that instability; essentially proposing a wise administration of central bankers (Schumpeter referred to wise bankers as ephors, protecting society in the interest of capital accumulation) to soften the peaks and valleys of instability. The state sets a floor through its ability to refinance assets at a price of its choosing, regardless of their market value (this is its bailout function), and it sets a ceiling by raising interest rates in an attempt to discourage speculation by making it a more costly endeavor (Minsky, 2008, pp. 48–49).

Minsky offers a path for what is to be done by appealing to what he refers to as the "Keynesian-Rooseveltian policy synthesis" (Minsky, 1981, p. 49). Contrary to the assumption that the effectiveness of the New Deal was due to a system of transfer payments and social insurance programs, Minsky argues that the most effective programs were the ones that constrained financial speculation, and that focused on full employment schemes (Minsky, 1981). This wise administration of income allocation and investment was what Minsky saw as a path to placing the ceilings and floors on financial instability. This insight also sheds light on a direct connection to Marxian analysis. Minsky argues that Keynes, and by extension twentieth century Keynesianism, can be understood as a conservative Marxist who is pro-capitalist because his analysis uncovered the internal and endogenously-produced contradictions of financial capitalism without Marx's "pejorative" element (Minsky, 1981, p. 54). Here is where we complete the bridge that Minksy provides from Piketty to flash capitalism. Whereas Piketty conceives of the role of the state as an external force that can provide just-in-time fixes when financial returns outpace growth, Minsky showed that the role of the state has to be conceived of endogenously in order to manage financial instability, just like the crises which it addresses are endogenous.

The perspective of flash capitalism highlights how Minsky's prescription of wise fiscal policy to be administered ultimately does not follow from his own logic. Minsky believed that capitalism could be properly administered so as to

minimize its internal contradiction through proper policy. If, however, the contradictions are never transcended, and the fixes that wise policy provides can only set the stage for future instability, it makes rather more sense to conclude that the policy enacted itself becomes a catalyst of instability. This is an immanent critique positing that the state, via fiscal policy, maintains the churn of financial accumulation, and its concurrent instability. The result would be more frequent and more intense downturns, as well as more intense and ephemeral booms. Where both Piketty and Minsky draw an untenable conclusion that can only deal with the consequences, not the causes of instability (Agger & Luke, 2015, p. 341), flash capitalism provides better insight: the state becomes an enabler of the flash, desperately maintaining the valorization process through its increasingly necessary and increasingly intense interventions.

It is an important insight of flash capitalism that the speed and intensity of processes of accumulation is a better way of apprehending the dynamism of social processes. This gets past Piketty's wish for better tax policy, and Minsky's wish of wise administration, to conclude that instead of the state stepping in to tamp down the intensity of instability, it instead has an interest in participating in that instability to maintain capital valorization, inexorably fueling the same instability. Agger and Luke note this function of the state as a legitimating intervention that maintains the value of its unit of currency (338). The necessity of the state's sovereign action in order to maintain value of money and to keep capital accumulation continuing apace firmly situates flash capitalism in a Marxian tradition. Marx says, "The business of coining, like the establishing of a standard measure of prices, is an attribute proper to the state" (Marx, 1992, pp. 221–222). Using interest rates to cool speculation or to refinance distressed assets in order to make investors whole is similarly an attribute proper to the state. The result is that the role of the state is not simply to name the unit of account, but to participate in the process of valorizing that currency through sovereign fiscal intervention. If flash capitalism's speculative churn is the name of the game, then the state props that up via its sovereign authority to legitimize those social relations, even when they are disastrous. The real consequence that flash capitalism provides as a result of the Financial Instability Hypothesis is that the state is a catalyst for, not an external force against, frequent and deep financial instability. The next section will explore an explicit example of how the state acts as a catalyst for speculative churn.

The Economic Development Administration

While the preceding section establishes the state as an internal accelerant of flash capitalism, it is not necessarily thought of in such a way. This section will deal with the United States Economic Development Administration (EDA) to highlight how it conceives of itself and what it does, its mission of economic development as opposed to economic growth, and how it evaluates the outcomes of the programs it funds. Doing so will show how it is an accelerant of flash capitalism as opposed to a wise investor or manager in community development.

The EDA was established in 1965 to spur economic and community development in regions throughout the United States. The year is important because it is in the tail end of Minsky's "practical best," as the onset of speculative finance made the financial system more unstable. It makes historical sense why that a piece of legislation codifying state intervention to ameliorate that instability and protect regions from the consequences of that instability emerged when it did. The thrust of the legislation carves up the United States into Economic Development Districts (EDD), which are usually clusters of contiguous counties (though there are provisions for Indian Tribes and university research centers, too) that have a per capita income of 80 percent or lower of the national and/or an unemployment rate that is at least 1 percent above the national average (Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, 1965, p. 14). The counties are the most important unit because they file annual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS). CEDS are essentially federal grants that keep the EDA apprised of past present and future opportunities of economic development, specific strategies of transportation, business, or environmental protection that could be had, and how granted projects will improve economic prospects of the EDD (1965, p. 14). To put CEDS in terms of flash capitalism, they represent a documentation of the churn of the evolution of areas where a federal infusion of capital is requested.

It is especially noteworthy that the piece of legislation itself notes that incomes and employment are not evenly spread out, due to things like base closures, natural disasters, and outmigration, all of which necessitates federal economic intervention (1965, p.4). The act reiterates many times that the goal of economic development is to alleviate unemployment. The act further specifies that private-public partnerships are a way to keep economic development local but ensure that those localities can keep up with global technologies (1965, p. 7). The funding mechanism

is balanced, with Section 204(a) stating that the federal share of a project will be one half (1965, p. 9). There are exemptions of course, but the idea here is that the community bears responsibility for its own development, at least in part. To put this in more explicitly financial terms, one could say that this clause guarantees that EDDs have "skin in the game." Regardless, the outcome of funding CEDS projects is supposed to be a joint-effort of the private and federal sector that improves communities, buoys incomes, creates jobs, and gets EDDs back on the map, so to speak.

So far, none of this is out of the ordinary of collaborative governance discourse, although it is mildly surprising that uneven development is so openly discussed. Even so, the EDA seeks to develop local economies without artificially changing the character of those local economies (it of course assumes that this is possible and that localities might otherwise operate independently of larger flows). As the act continues, however, it becomes apparent that this objective is rather difficult to achieve. Take for instance the following clause of the EDA Act: "No financial assistance under this Act shall be extended to any project when the result would be to increase the production of goods, materials, or commodities, or the availability of services or facilities, when there is not sufficient demand for such goods, materials, commodities, services, or facilities, to employ the efficient capacity of existing competitive commercial or industrial enterprises" (p.11). The paradox comes into sharper focus, and carries with it some ideological baggage. There is an assurance here that public funding will not crowd out private capacity, and it further explicitly seeks to avoid the imagined difficulties of overproduction in planned economies. With all that being stipulated, it is not immediately apparent how the federal government will be able to spur development **without** increasing the production of and demand for goods, materials, etc. That is, if economic regions are in a persistent depressed state of high labor underutilization (i.e. unemployment), economic development would have to increase the demand for that commodity at the very least, as well as the incomes to purchase those commodities. There is no sense that the EDA simply conceives of economic development as simply driving up demand, but it suggests that until that boost in demand happens, it should not act. Below is an analysis of whether the EDA achieves this development-but-not-growth, but for now this is a tidy way to ignore the tension between growth and development. The cycle of persistent unemployment and its detrimental effect on workers being able to demand and/or consume what is being produced may seem obvious in a Marxian register, but the result of this proviso is a rather peculiar treatment of economic development that is separate from economic growth, but in a way that pits the two concepts against each other.

To sidestep this apparent contradiction requires some doing, but the result is that the EDA does not see itself as an engine of economic growth, but only of economic development. The EDA recently funded a white paper that attempts to define what economic development is, and how it is distinct from economic growth (Feldman, Hadjimichael, Kemeny, & Lanahan, 2014). Apparently, the inability to properly distinguish between the two leads to a "confused" policy debate, and renders us unable to come to a "clear and shared understanding" of what economic development means (2014, p.1). The distinction they offer is worth quoting at length:

> While economic growth is simply an increase in aggregate output, economic development is concerned with quality improvements, the introduction of new goods and services, risk mitigation and the dynamics of innovation and entrepreneurship. Economic development is about positioning the economy on a higher growth trajectory. Of the two, economic development is less uniquely a function of market forces… It is within the purview of government (p. 1.).

While the government probably does not need a blessing from professional economists to determine its realm of action, this definition is nevertheless anything but clear and shared. Even ignoring the obvious relationship between increasing aggregate output and the need for improved infrastructure in order to do so, the authors explicitly state that development puts local economies on a higher growth trajectory, making the distinction harder to maintain. It stands to reason that the whole point of development is to get that increase in aggregate output, or else there's no reason to track it. This absurdity comes into starker relief when discussing jobs. The authors also argue that jobs are an example of their distinction; economic growth measures the number of jobs and economic development tracks "wages, career advancement opportunities, and working conditions" (p. 1). If this distinction is held up, then any analysis of jobs that delinks them from wages, mobility, conditions, etc. is obviously impoverished, and renders economic growth a worthless category. Clearly, these two concepts of growth and development are related, but even more important, the idea of a growth trajectory in development can be read as the state goosing local economies to grow through their investments. Regardless of whether the state invests effectively, spurring investment through grant funding has a speculative character with the desired goal of economic growth at the end. However, by delinking the concept of growth from development, the speculative churn of federal investment can continue apace, and the onus for showing that these CEDS projects led to the goals stated can be deferred, perhaps indefinitely as will be shown below.

Flash capitalism is fast, and the structure and goals of the EDA show no different. The churn is quick, (re) investments are continually assessed and remade through annual CEDS reporting, and the foamy layer of opportunity in development is constantly valorized through federal investment to keep up the pace. Growth can be measured, changed, or otherwise assessed; but by ignoring growth for the more ephemeral economic development, regions can always maintain a need for more federal intervention, to achieve a host to a number of measures, such as quality of life indicators and environmental metrics (p.5). There are always more projects that need funding, and with the money already blocked out in grants in the legislation, that flash has to go somewhere. When looking at the EDA through the lens of flash capitalism, the process of constant intervention as state valorization becomes clear. Instead of economic development becoming a one-shot boost to get communities back on the playing field, ready to compete in a lean and mean global market, Feldman et al are quick to point out the ongoing process of economic development. They note that economic development should not be associated simply with eradicating poverty, but warn that "all regions are vulnerable to economic restructuring and need to consider how to adapt to the changing economy. Places once prosperous have been humbled by international competition… Even places currently doing well realize their economic base could quickly evaporate, leaving them insecure about future prospects. Continual restructuring is the new norm…" (Feldman et al, p. 2). All this because the loci of production are no longer based on regional resources, and the knowledge economy can pop up anywhere, at any time, and so "the concept of economic development is now relevant to the full range of nations, places and communities" (p. 2). They continue that economic development is the sine qua non of the good life, that prosperity and quality of life can only be provided via economic development (p. 19). The EDA Act itself echoes the need for community assistance via constant intervention that is performed under the guise of an ever-present need for intervention, in a section on economic adjustment, where the Secretary of Commerce may provide extra grants to meet special needs that come from "actual **or threatened** severe unemployment; or economic adjustment problems resulting from severe change in economic conditions" [emphasis added] (Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, 1965, p. 12). Indeed, the continual monitoring, intervention, reinvestment, and the flash of quick capital from the federal state to make sure regions and clusters can be prepared for economic downturns (even if only perceived) is perceived of as an essential component of Eudaimonia (Feldman et al, p. 20).

In a regime of flash capitalism, this same dynamic shows the unresolved contradiction of capital accumulation and the desperate attempts to valorize accumulation through state investment. As such, the end result does not matter as much as maintaining the speed of the process of intervention itself. Even though the EDA conceives of itself as the public half of a private-public partnership that leads to thriving EDDs that are able to catch up to the national average in some economic indicators, what remains to be seen is whether and how these objectives are achieved through the wisdom of CEDS investments. That is, if the end result of this process is supposed to be the Eudaimonia of local communities, then surely the EDA submits itself to routine and deep evaluation and assessment from communities in the EDDs in order to measure the quality of life indicators, employment, innovation, and all of the other qualitative markers that economic development can supposedly capture outside of simple "growth" categories. If, on the other hand, the EDA only assesses CEDS for their predictive quality of how to identify funding projects, then this strengthens the flash capitalism thesis of the need for state involvement to continually valorize an otherwise crisis-ridden system of capital accumulation to keep the economic engines moving.

It is a common lament of development scholarship that there is a lack of any empirical evidence of whether economic development strategies actually achieve their stated goals (Reese & Fasenfest, 2003; Watts et al., 2011). Part of this is surely because of the more abstract and qualitative measures that are supposedly different from growth, but even if this is true, there is a contradiction between the stated goals of the EDA, and what is happening in the communities themselves. In a study funded by the EDA, they were upfront that they were, "…not interested in developing an approach for evaluating completed projects but instead waned a tool that could provide a formative or predictive assessment of how a proposed project might fare before it was even selected" (Watts et al., 2011, p. 66). While other EDA-funded studies suggest that that the community outcomes are indeed important, the real thing the EDA is interested in the process of CEDS planning, noting that "…so much of the value of the plan lies in the process itself and the extent to which the plan actually comes to fruition" (Reese & Fasenfest, 2003, p. 266). These two studies under consideration here are supposed to develop instruments to empirically measure economic development, but there are two key flaws. In Watts et al, the methodology is flawed and assumes that CEDS funding works before it collects any data. In Reese & Fasenfest, the assessment is based purely on the perceptions of CEDS participants, and not only measurable outcomes. Discussing these in turn will show how even with (or indeed as a result of) these limitations, their conclusions strengthen a Pikettian blockbuster Marxism that seeks to remedy the

ravages of capitalism with wise management of public-private partnerships, in a way that forecloses on the more critical analysis from the vantage of flash capitalism.

Watts et al. assumes that the "EDA public works investments have a positive and measurable economic impact in the communities in which they occur" (Watts et al., 2011, p. 67). They admit that this point is not a given, but continue anyway. This is somewhat surprising because in their assessment of development literature, they find that there is very little evidence for aggregate success of EDA programs. While the flash of state funding does show some boost to employment, the impact they have on incomes is much more ambiguous (Watts et al., 2011, p. 68). The authors believe that maybe the uneven effects of flash development helps with mobility, this is not necessarily clear, and pin their hopes on "industrial cluster theory" (Watts et al., 2011, p. 68). Industrial cluster, however, is just development bluster, and assumes that if there is enough economic activity emanating from areas surrounding the EDDs, then adding one job near an EDD will add .4 jobs in other parts of the district (Watts et al., 2011). To put this in terms of flash capitalism, the flash from state capital infusion hopefully ripples through the district, conjuring marginal returns of along the way.

Because the article starts off with the assumption that EDA investment achieves its objectives of community enrichment and that the EDA is only concerned with the predictive power of CEDS projects, it is not surprising that their article focuses on how EDA grants can best be sought. The authors present a list of findings, but they can be summed up that the best performing CEDS are the ones that need federal intervention the least. That is, EDDs with strong private investment and minimal federal necessity, who display an ability to draw together multiple private capitals have the most long-term sustainable projects (Watts et al., 2011, p. 74). This may be true, but it then belies the reason that EDDs are established in the legislation discussed above. The whole reason that EDDs are eligible for state capital infusion is precisely because private capitals are lacking, employment is depressed, and incomes are low. It is not a very satisfying finding that the most successful EDDs are the ones that might disqualify them from being EDDs in the first place. On the other hand, if the goal of flash capitalism is to find worthwhile projects to create bonanzas, then this is a perfectly germane piece, it just does not seem to adhere to the stated goals the EDA has. If projects are geared only toward those which are fundable to continue securing federal money, then a cycle emerges where an EDD puts up half of the money for a project that is assessed only on its renewable fundability and not whether it makes an appreciable difference in the lives of the communities in that district.

In Reese and Fasenfast, some of the same questions emerge, such as what makes a CEDS grant successful? Again, with this study, the EDA was not concerned about measuring the outcomes of the grants per se, but about measuring the CEDS documents themselves – how well did they involve community participants, whose interests are served, and what is the perception of success? In the CEDS analyzed, some interesting patterns emerge. Most notable is that there is a perception of very highly detailed strategies for projects (Reese & Fasenfest, 2003, p. 272), while at the same time, the composition of CEDS committees very often do not represent the various demographics in the EDDs, in terms of racial/ethnic makeup, education or profession, noting that, "[t]here were no CEDS committees composed of at least 50% professional, educational, or diversity members. Sixty-two percent of CEDS committees had no community members at all, 72% had no diversity in membership, 60% had no educational members, 67% had no economic development members, and 75% had no members from the professions" (p. 270). This is remarkable because it calls into question how CEDS committees that do not represent their communities produce highly detailed strategies for fundable projects that help those same communities that are not being represented (to say nothing of the fact that so many CEDS committees did not have any economic developers on them). Further, when asked if CEDS projects were implemented effectively, half of the community stakeholders in the process simply did not know (p. 272). Less than half of the community stakeholders thought the CEDS projects were effective, though 75% of CEDS committee members did (p.274). The authors offer the possibility that a key problem of EDA funding is that "…policies do not appear to match needs and goals as closely as would be desired. This appears to be the case at least in part because the availability of funding drives project election more than do abstract goals" (p. 275). Of course, as noted above, the whole notion of economic development is supposedly tied to the "abstract goals" that the EDA refuses to measure.

It is increasingly clear that the involvement of community stakeholders is not important to a well-executed (read: fundable) CEDS project. Having abandoned the pretense that this is what EDA assessments are measuring, it is worthwhile to uncover who are the CEDS committee participants who are giving highly detailed strategies for projects, and in whose interests these projects are being pursued. Reese and Fasenfest have two main findings: 1) business and government interests are overrepresented on CEDS committees, and that other community participants are underrepresented, and 2) CEDS projects are driven by what is most likely to secure funding (p. 277). With these

insights in mind, it becomes much clearer to see how a disconnect between effective, highly detailed strategies, and a lack of involvement or knowledge of those strategies by members of the community that these documents seek to assist. There is also the obvious problem that there is no reason to conflate fundable projects with what is good for a given community.

The insight that business interests have captured an avenue of social investment, or conflate community interests with its own, is not on its own anything new. Veblen warned as much over one hundred years ago that having the business interests of a managerial class overtake the production interests of a society leads to an irrational allocation of resources and production (Veblen, 1915). That may be a lamentable problem on its own, but it shows the problems of the skin-in-the-game model of economic development offered by the EDA, and how wise investors of Piketty's blockbuster Marxism are not able to stem the tide of flash capitalism – in fact they facilitate it. This discussion of the EDA and how it conceives of its mission, along with how and why it assesses how it does help show the poverty of blockbuster Marxism. The whole point of CEDS is to get federal money and maybe, if the districts are lucky after their 50% ante, they'll experience a little ripple multiplier from the bonanza. But that's not the stated goal. The clear goal is for business interests to get the federal government and communities to pay for projects, sustaining the churn of capital investment and accumulation. The flash of federal infusion makes this possible, and is a well that can always be dipped into, because of the wild swings of financial instability that makes all places vulnerable.

The Central Arizona Governments CEDS of 2016

The city of Phoenix, and its county of Maricopa do not qualify for involvement in an EDD. However, since as noted above, the multiplier of employment that supposedly ripples out means that the EDDs surrounding Phoenix certainly have it in mind as they offer their projects. Phoenix is actually rather unique in its orientation as a hotbed of flash capitalism, from its inception being a place for hucksters and get-rich-quick scam artists to make a buck and then leave (Good, 1990). This makes the surrounding areas an interesting case study to see if a city more or less built on flash capitalism has provided that employment multiplier. By analyzing the Central Arizona Governments (CAG) CEDS draft of 2016, it will become clear that this example of a concrete development plan confirms the critical examination of CEDS assessments above, and that, once again, flash capitalism provides a better lens to see who benefits from development schemes.

CAG is one of three active EDDs in Arizona and is comprised of Pinal and Gila County, bordering Phoenix along the south and east side, respectively. The proximity to Phoenix is prominent in the CEDS projects, especially for Pinal County, which borders both Maricopa and Pima County, where Tucson is located. The CEDS draft for 2016 will be analyzed with two objectives in mind: 1) Who wrote the draft, and 2) Whose interests are served by the projects being proposed. If the analysis above holds, then the CEDS should not include very much on the quality of life for residents, and instead focus on development projects for economic growth that are aligned with regional business interests.

The CAG CEDS committee members are surprisingly inactive. The assessments above noted how many CEDS committees did not have economic developers, educators, industrial representatives, or other community stakeholders. The CAG CEDS is no different. Of the 32 seats on the board, 10 were vacant, and the remaining 22 had 15 public officials, 6 economic development partnerships, and 1 educational institution with no other community stakeholders involved ("Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy: Central Arizona Governments," 2016, p. 5). Most of the CEDS is recapitulation of the data that qualifies these two counties as an EDD: wages are lower than the national average, and unemployment is higher. What is most interesting in this exposition is how CAG sees itself in a global register, it is not a community of different economic areas to get a little infusion of money from the federal government, but rather an explicit commitment to the flash. Take for instance transportation planning. A new Interstate (I-11) which connects Las Vegas, NV and Phoenix may expand to become a CANAMEX corridor, connecting Mexico and British Columbia, and on its way to Nogales, Mexico, could go through the CAG Region (p. 24). Of course, one of the strategies is to lobby to have I-11 constructed. This is not to suggest that having a massive corridor running through the region is somehow bad for the region, but it certainly is a different story than some plucky counties coming together to build up their economic resiliency, and instead trying to make sure that I-11 cuts through this region since it is already in Phoenix anyway.

However, international superhighways notwithstanding, the CAG CEDS is full of very vague assertions about

its goals. There is talk about shifting away from its historical reliance on mining, and into the "innovation economy," whatever that is (p. 26). As ambiguous as this assertion is, however, it makes perfect sense couched within the analysis above. The CAG Region seems fully aware that economic downturns can strike anywhere at any time, and being innovative is an economic tool that transcends the rural/urban divide, apparently. Even when the CEDS tries to get more concrete, listing goals and objectives (after the obligatory SWOT analysis, of course) do not seem to yield any actionable items. For instance, the goal of "broadband infrastructure" has two objectives: "provide resilient/redundant broadband networks within communities" and "explore variety of broadband distribution methods for last mile connections" (p. 34). This is probably a good thing, but it is unclear how a citizen of Pinal or Gila County would know just how they were going to get internet. It seems more likely that these objectives may make more concrete sense to the business community about how businesses are lured and established in certain areas, especially with the help of an infusion of public money. At any rate, these objectives try to take advantage of the population explosion that is happening in the sunbelt. It remains to be seen if that alone is enough to sustain development.

There is a mention of quality of life in these goals and objectives. The goal is to "maintain existing quality of life and utilize current assets to attract visitors" with the objectives to achieve that goal being to "create a coordinated effort to attract visitors to the region" and "preserve character of communities by preserving heritage" (p. 35). Essentially, enhancing the quality of life for residents of the CAG region is to bolster tourism dollars coming in. There are no other action items related to quality of life. The CEDS ends with a list of projects and their costs. They run a gamut from construction of community kitchens, to downtown renovation and revitalization projects. Again, the goal here is not to establish the desirability of these items, but to note that the vast majority of the projects seem to benefit business interests, to facilitate commerce or tourism through roads, bypasses and interchanges. If Phoenix has been a hot spot for people to experience the flash and get out before the crash, the CAG CEDS seems to be positioning itself as flash-adjacent, and trying to invite people to the party. At any rate, the CAG Region CEDS does not seem to be a result of collaborative governance with representative input from numerous community organizations and stakeholders, and is instead proposing what seems fundable, as the analysis above would indicate.

Conclusion

This article contributed to a critique of the blockbuster Marxism of liberal economists like Thomas Piketty, and in so doing contribute to building a theory of flash capitalism. Doing so meant first recognizing that Minsky was correct that the state was not only a corrective to financial instability, but also an agent of the same cycle of instability. It also means, **pace** Minsky, that the conclusion we should draw is not that the wise administration of fiscal policy can contain instability. Rather, that participation inexorably accelerates and deepens instability and crisis, since the state must devote itself to facilitating accumulation at all costs. This hallmark of flash capitalism can be seen in how the EDA administers its economic development grants. By giving half funding for the projects, it compels EDDs to put some skin in the development game and chase dollars, hoping to get a boost in income as a result. Projects that get funded are projects that look most fundable, making a feedback loop in the process of putting CEDS together that ignores the communities they seek to avoid, and instead focuses on the business interests of development districts that are devoted to accumulation. The CAG Region is no different.

Joseph Schumpeter had faith in central bankers, and with his usual rhetorical flair referred to them as "ephors." Much like the ephors of Sparta, in Schumpeter's mind, central bankers were devoted to the good of the nation, and should manage fiscal policy wisely on the nation's behalf. We know better than to think that now, and while central bankers are certainly not the wise administrators that we might hope to have, neither, in a regime of flash capitalism, are district planners, angling for the flash to come their way.

Endnotes

1. The celebrity status Piketty achieve is hard to understate. For instance, Bloomberg Businessweek made a teen idol style magazine cover featuring Piketty, where he is referred to as "Karl Marx's New Crush." http://assets.bwbx.io/images/users/iqjWHBFdfxIU/i7daZ5ourC3c/v1/-1x-1.jpg

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Algorithmic Capitalism in the Epoch of Digital Reason

Michael A. Peters

Algorithmic trading (automated trading, black-box trading, or simply algo-trading) is the process of using computers programmed to follow a defined set of instructions for placing a trade in order to generate profits at a speed and frequency that is impossible for a human trader. The defined sets of rules are based on timing, price, quantity or any mathematical model. Apart from profit opportunities for the trader, algo-trading makes markets more liquid and makes trading more systematic by ruling out emotional human impacts on trading activities.

http://www.investopedia.com/articles/active-trading/101014/basics-algorithmic-trading-concepts-and-examples.asp#ixzz4KI3tX5vx

A small group of high-frequency algorithmic trading firms have invested heavily in technology to leverage the nexus of high-speed communications, mathematical advances, trading, and high-speed computing. By doing so, they are able to complete trades at lightning speeds. High-frequency algorithmic trading strategies rely on computerized quantitative models that identify which type of financial instruments to buy or sell (e.g., stocks, options, or futures), as well as the quantity, price, timing, and location of the trades. These so-called black boxes are capable of reading market data, transmitting thousands of order messages per second to an exchange, cancelling and replacing orders based on changing market conditions, and capturing price discrepancies with little or no human intervention.

— Carol C. Clarke, (2010) "Controlling Risk in a Lightning-Speed Trading Environment: Essays on Issues," The Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, No 27.

"Cybernetic Capitalism"

Ben Agger was a pioneer. His death on July 14, 2015 was untimely and his passing affected a good many colleagues. His life was a shot in the arm to sociology and political economy. His journal, set up with Tim Luke—Fast Capitalism—is a sociological leader. I was greatly honored to be invited to join the board and although I never met Ben I felt beholden to him as one does to another thinker. The conception of "fast capitalism" is unambiguously political - concerned with the "impact of rapid information and communication technologies on self, society and culture." Agger (1989, 2004, repr. 2016) first theorised fast capitalism and then "faster capitalism" analyzing "domination at the speed of light." As he writes in the Preface:

"A decade after I published Fast Capitalism, I started to theorize the Internet as an important moment of Post-Fordist, postmodern capitalism (p. v)."

Over the past few years, driven by Agger's examples, I have tried to give different conceptualizations an airing. They have taken the form of a variety of epithets alongside "fast" that attempt to flesh out the original notion adding features of: (i) the application to "fast knowledge" in the universities and the rise of big data and bibliometrics on "performativity" (Besley & Peters, 2008); (ii) the cybersystem such as the algorithm, network, and mathematical modeling that accompanies high frequency trading ("algorithmic capitalism," financialisation and finance capitalism) (Peters, 2013; Peters, Paraskeva & besley, 2015); (iii) "cognitive capitalism" as it is part of a wider conception of cybernetic capitalism based on conceptualizations of digital labor (Peters & Bulut, 20; (iv) cloud capitalism arising

from cloud computing that emphasises "the systematised virtualisation of data storage and access, the coalescence of power into an instantly available utility, ready for any eventuality" (Coley & Lockwood, 2012); and, finally, the shift from a notion of biopolitics to what I call "bioinformational capitalism" as the leading edge of informatics and biology (Peters, 2012) that can be viewed within what I call the "epoch of digital reason" (Peters, 2015).

Much of this work runs in parallel with Ben Agger's work on sociontology starting with The Virtual Self, (2003) and Fast Capitalism (1989) as well as Timothy Lukes' early statement in Screens of Power (1990). All of these touch upon the restructuraing of power, knowledge, labor, and capital and all bear some relationship to my work. I am also influenced by other related works that I can mention briefly here including work by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Yann Moulier Boutang, Nick Dyer-Withford's Cybermarx (1989), and Cyberproletariat (2015).

"Cognitive capitalism" (CC) is a theoretical term that has become significant in the critical literature analyzing a new form of capitalism sometimes called the "third phase of capitalism," after the earlier phases of mercantile and industrial capitalism (Boutang, 2011). CC purportedly is a new set of productive forces and an ideology that focuses on an accumulation process centered on immaterial assets utilizing immaterial or digital labor processes and the co-creation and co-production of symbolic goods and experiences in order to capture the gains from knowledge and innovation which is considered central to the knowledge economy. It is a term that focuses on the fundamental economic and media shift ushered in with the Internet as platform and post-Web 2.0 technologies that have impacted the mode of production and the emergence of digital labor. The theory of cognitive capitalism has its origins in French and Italian thinkers, particularly Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's Capitalism and Schizophrenia, Michel Foucault's biopolitics, Hardt and Negri's trilogy Empire, Multitude, and Commonwealth, as well as the Italian 'Autonomist' Marxist movement that has its origins in the Italian Operaismo ('workerism') in the 1960s. More recently CC emanates from a group of scholars centered around the journal Multitudes[1] (http://www.multitudes. net/) (after Hardt & Negri) established by Boutang in 2000. In this essay I will focus on "algorithmic capitalism" and also make an attempt after clarifying these features to bring to bear a concept of "the epoch of digital reason" (Peters, 2014) as the conceptual frame within which to view these developments.

Cybernetic capitalism is an outcome of changes in the modern concepts of information and communications within a systems framework. Modern cybernetics began with Norbert Weiner who defined the field with his 1948 book Cybernetics: or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine where he developed the science of information feedback systems linking control and communication in an understanding of the computer as 'ideal central nervous system to an apparatus for automatic control' (Wiener, 1948, p.36). The prehistory of the term can be traced back at least to Plato where **kybernētēs** meaning "steersman" or "governor" (from the Latin **gubernator**)— the same root as government—was used to refer governing of the city-state as an art based on the metaphor of the art of navigation or steering a ship. Thus, from the beginning the term was associated with politics and the art of government or management as well as with communication and organization.

As an epistemology related to systems and systems philosophy the term functioned as an approach for investigating a wide range of phenomena in information and communication theory, computer science and computer-based design environments, artificial intelligence, management, education, child-based psychology, human systems and consciousness studies. It also was used to characterize cognitive engineering and knowledge-based systems, "sociocybernetics," human development, emergence and self-regulation, ecosystems, sustainable development, database and expert systems, as well as hypermedia and hypertext, collaborative decision-support systems, and World Wide Web studies. It also has been used to talk neural nets, software engineering, vision systems, global community, and individual freedom and responsibility.

Cybernetics is also broadly related to systems philosophy and theory and as Charles François (1999: 203) notes both function as "a metalanguage of concepts and models for transdisciplinarian use, still now evolving and far from being stabilized." François (1999) provides a detailed history of systemics and cybernetics in terms of a series historical stages. **First**, Precursors (Before 1948)—the "Prehistory of Systemic-Cybernetic Language"—going back to the Greeks and to Descartes in the modern world and ranging across the disciplines.

Second, "From Precursors to Pioneers" (1948-1960) beginning with Weiner who aimed to address the problem of prediction and control and the importance of feedback for corrective steering and including the first generation of modern theorists of cybernetics: Shannon and Weaver (1949), Von Bertalanffy (1950), Kenneth Boulding (1953) as well as von Neumann on the theory of automata, Von Förster biological computer and his collaborators like Ashby (1956), Pask (1975) and Maturana who pursued questions in human learning, autopoiesis and cognition, and Prigogine (1955) on systemics and dissipative structures in complex systems.

Third, "Innovators" (After 1960) beginning with Simon's (1962) discussion of complexity, Miller's (1978) work

on living systems, Maturana's work on autopoiesis, i.e. self-production, Mandelbrot's (1977) work on fractal forms, Zadeh (1965) work fuzzy sets and fuzzy logic, Thom's work on the theory of catastrophes, and the development of chaos theory as the study of unpredictable behavior of deterministic non-linear systems that are complex by nature. This stage emphasizes important work on ecology and economics including Odum (1971), Daly (1973) on steady-state economy, Pimentel (1977) on the energy balance in agricultural production (François, 1999: 214).

Fourth, in "Some Significant Recent Contributions" (After 1985) François (1999) examines the Hungarian Csanyi's (1989) work on the 'replicative model of self-organization, Langton (1989) on AL (artificial life), Sabeili's (1991) theory of processes, and McNeil (1993) on the possibility of a better synthesis between physical sciences and living systems. He ends by referencing Prat's (1964) work on the "aura" (traces that remain after the demise of the system), Grassé on "stigmergy" (indirect communication taking place among individuals in social insect societies) and Gerard de Zeeuw (2000) on "invisibility."

If modern cybernetics was a child of the 1950s, catastrophe theory developed as a branch of bifurcation theory in the study of dynamical systems originating with the work of the French mathematician Rene Thom in the 1960s and developed by Christopher Zeeman in the 1970s. Catastrophes are bifurcations between different equilibria, or fixed-point attractors and has been applied to capsizing boats at sea and bridge collapse. Complexity is concerned with theoretical foundations of computer science being concerned with the study of the **intrinsic complexity of computational tasks and rests on understanding the** central role of randomness. Complexity as an approach to knowledge and market systems now recognizes both the development of global systems architectures in (tele) communications and information with the development of **knowledge production systems** that increasingly rests not only on the establishment of new and better platforms (sometimes called Web 2.0), the semantic web, new search algorithms, and processes of digitization.

The term "cybernetic capitalism" was first used by Keon Robbins and Frank Webster (1988) in a chapter called "Cybernetic capitalism: Information, Technology and Everyday Life." They use to term to discuss the exploitation of microelectronics and information technology as an economic and political "mobilization" of society, after Bell's "postindustrial society" and the literature on "post-Fordism." They argue that the new information technologies (in 1988!) represent a significant stage in the strategy of "relative mobilization"—one in which technological domination becomes extensively and systematically used in spheres beyond the workplace" (p. 52). The authors make use of Gorz and Foucault to discuss the intensification of work and the increase in societal surveillance where information technologies "constitute a mega-machine, a systematic and integrated mechanism" where "information/knowledge becomes a site of the struggle for power (p. 72).

In 1994 Jerry Harris and Carl Davidson as part of The Chicago Third Wave Study Group in "The Cybernetic Revolution and the Crisis of Capitalism" argued "New technologies have changed the face of capitalism, affecting the economic base, the relations of production, and are impacting political strategy." Douglas R. Holmes & George E. Marcus (2006) write of para-ethnography and the rise of the symbolic analyst:

> Fast-capitalism thus designates the circumstances under which knowledge is created and effaced as the communicative space of the nation-state is eclipsed and our subjects; and we too must think and act within a communicative space mediated increasingly by supranational markets (p. 43).

In a previous paper I attempted to develop a grounded and literature-based analysis of the main forms of "new" or "advanced" capitalism referred to by theorists and scholars (Peters et al, 2009). I called the overall conception "cybernetic capitalism" and identified five major categories that fell under the heading. "Cybernetic" is a somewhat dated term and some would argue that the concept is also outmoded but there are good reasons to hang on to the term in its fourth and fifth generation iterations in how they apply to markets and to modern capitalism.

Forms of Cybernetic Capitalism

1. Informational Capitalism: The Nature of Information/Knowledge

"Informational" (Castells, Fuchs, Fitzpatrick, Schmiede) "Digital" (Schiller & McChesney), "Cyber" (Dyer-Witherford), "Fast" (Agger) "High-tech" (Haug), "Academic Capitalism" (Slaughter), "Knowledge Capitalism" (Peters & Besley)

2. Cultural Capitalism: The Change of Culture

"New Culture" (Sennett), "Knowing Capitalism" (Thrift), "New Spirit" (Boltanski & Chiapello), "Cultural Economy" (Pryke & Gay) "Cognitive –Cultural" (Scott)

3. Cognitive Capitalism: Immaterial Labor

"Cognitive Capitalism" (Moulier Boutang, Vercellone, De Angelis & Harvie, Fumagalli & Lucarelli), "Affective Capitalism" (Massumi, Dowling, Hardt), "Immaterial Labor" (Marx, Negri & Hardt), "Semio-capitalism" (Beradi), "Education and digital labour" (Peters & Bulut)

4. Finance Capitalism: "Financialization"

"Finance capitalism" (Forster, Glyn, Leyshon & Thrift, Vestergaard), "financialization" (Epstein, Vasudevan, Bresser-Pereira, Palley), Global financial crisis and education (Peters)

5. Biocapitalism: "Biopolitics"

Biopower, biopolitics (Foucault) Biocapitalism (Deleuze & Guattari, Rajan), Bioinformational capitalism (Peters)

Each of these conceptions emphasize an aspect of the conceptual change involved in the emergence of a global information system: **speed, acceleration, mobilization, location, network, circulation, algebrification, formalization, mathematical modeling, bioinformatics, organicity**. These features have become increasingly more evident over the last couple of decades as finance capitalism has developed and equity markets have become increasingly reliant on algorithms.

Algorithmic Capitalism[2]

The word **algorithm** comes from the name of the 9th century Persian Muslim mathematician Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Musa Al-Khwarizmi. The word **algorism** originally referred only to the rules of performing arithmetic using Hindu-Arabic numerals but evolved via European Latin translation of Al-Khwarizmi's name into **algorithm** by the 18th century. The use of the word evolved to include all definite procedures for solving problems or performing tasks.

History of Algorithms and Algorithmics

(http://www.scriptol.com/programming/algorithm-history.php0

Khwarizmi, Abu Jafar Muhammad ibn Musa al- (d. ca. 850)

Mathematician, astronomer, and geographer. Synthesized extant Hellenic, Sanskritic, and cuneiform traditions to develop algebra, a term derived from the title of one of his books (containing the term al-jabr, meaning "forcing" [numbers). Introduced Arabic numerals into the Latin West, based on a place-value decimal system developed from Indian sources. The word algorithm is derived from a Latin corruption of his name.

Oxford Islamic Studies Online

(http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e1305)

Algorithmic capitalism and its dominance of the market increasingly across all asset classes has truly arrived. Rob Iati (July 10, 2009) writing for Advanced Trading asserts:

Algorithms account for more than 25% of all shares traded by the buy side today — a number steadily rising for several years now. However, the incredible capabilities offered by technology have given meteoric rise to a relative few high-frequency proprietary trading firms that now wield far greater influence on the markets today than most people recognize. The familiar names of Lehman, Bear and Merrill are being replaced by less familiar ones like Wolverine, IMC and Getco... high-frequency trading firms, which represent approximately 2% of the 20,000 or so trading firms operating in the U.S. markets today, account for 73% of all U.S. equity trading volume.[3]

Writing almost a decade ago Iati (2009) indicates that value of high-frequency algorithmic trading relies on "a

real-time, collocated, high-frequency trading platform… where data is collected and orders are created and routed to execution venues in sub-millisecond times."

Algorithmic capitalism is an aspect of informationalism or informational capitalism or "cybernetic capitalism," a terms that I prefer because it speaks to the genealogy of postmodern capitalism and recognizes more precisely the cybernetic systems similarities among various sectors of the postindustrial capitalist economy in its third phases of development—from mercantilism, industrialism to cybernetics—linking the growth of the multinational info-utilities (e.g., Goggle, Microsoft, Amazon) and their spectacular growth in the last twenty years, with developments in biocapitalism and the informatization of biology, and fundamental changes taking place with algorithmic trading and the development of so-called financialization.

It is in this context that also we can talk of "cloud capitalism" that is recentralizing the Net and creating large scale monopolies in the knowledge economy, on a vastly larger scale than anything imagined possible in the industrial era. Take for example Google's project of digitizing millions of books that will make its digital library bigger than the Library of Congress. By doing so as Charles Leadbeater (2010) argues "Google will acquire huge power over the future of publishing. It will be able to head off potential competition from other databases of digital books." As he goes on to explain: "Google is the first and most successful exponent of a new kind of economic power: cloud capitalism." He suggests that the Internet that the cloud capitalists want to give us is quite different from that of the "information superhighway" or "cyberspace":

> In cloud computing, our data – emails, documents, pictures, songs and software — will be stored remotely in a digital cloud hanging above us, always there to access from any device: computer, television, games console, hand-held and mobile. We should be able to draw down as much or as little of the shared cloud as we need (http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2010/feb/07/cloud-computing-google-apple).

Leadbeater raises questions about the way cloud capitalism aims at complete control that ultimately excludes other databases while maximizing revenues and the capacity of clouds to hold vast amounts of data on us that occludes the interests of citizens and eludes the control of governments. We might see "cloud capitalism" as an aspect of a wider phenomenon of cognitive or cybernetic capitalism.

There is no doubt that speed is a central feature of global markets and of global networked capitalism. Agger builds on theorists like Paul Virilio (2006) who sees speed as a determinant of future society and economy. Some evidence for this philosophical orientation can be gained from HFT—high frequency trading—that is a kind of algorthmic trading characterised by high turnovers that uses a platform to transact large numbers of trades in very short time periods, shaving pennies off lightning bulk trades every mcro-second. Electronic exchange only came into being in 1998; by 2009 HFT comprised over 70% of all equity trading. It has since retreated somewhat. Yet, since its introduction the speed of HFT has increased from seconds per trade to milli- and microseconds. One investment analyst advises that

"…algo-traders make trades in 10 milliseconds or less. some say it's as fast as half a millionth of a second – that's more than a million times faster than the human brain can process a decision."[4] He goes on to write:

> Today, high-frequency trading is even faster. According to Aequitas Innovations, the parent company of Canada's newest stock exchange dedicated to leveling the playing field for investors, 11% of all 2014 observable orders in the Canadian marketplace lasted less than one millisecond. In other words, by the time you blink your eye and before you even place a trade, a high-frequency trader may have already processed 400 orders ahead of you.

In a paper published online some years ago (Peters, 2012) entitled "Algorithmic Capitalism and Educational Futures: Informationalism and the Googlization of Knowledge"[5] I commented upon the rise of a new kind of capitalism that Agger had been one of the first to name and to begin to scrutinize its social consequences:

> Algorithmic capitalism and its dominance of the market increasingly across all asset classes has truly arrived. It is an aspect of informationalism (informational capitalism) or "cybernetic capitalism," a term that recognizes more precisely the cybernetic systems similarities among various sectors of the post-industrial capitalist economy in its third phase of development - from mercantilism, industrialism to cybernetics - linking the growth of the multinational info-utilities (e.g., Goggle, Microsoft, Amazon) and their spectacular growth in the last twenty years, with developments in biocapitalism and the informatization of biology, and fundamental changes taking place with algorithmic trading and the development of so-called financialization.

Speed and velocity are the main aspects of a new finance capitalism that operates at the speed of light based on

sophisticated "buy" and "sell" algorithms. Already researchers have demonstrated that data transfer using a single laser can send 26 terabits per second down an optical fiber and there are comparable reports that lasers will make financial "high-frequency" trading even faster.

Tyler Falk (2013) reports on "How lasers will make financial trading even faster":

> In the world of computerised financial trading, every second counts and superfast fibre-optic networks may no longer be quick enough. Laser beam technology originally developed for the military is being rolled out to shave time off trades. It will compete with new microwave networks that are increasingly being used by traders. http://www.bbc.com/news/technology-22380611

Assignment, the BBC program explored HFT and the behavior of some banks utilizing super-fast, computerized share-dealing systems that enable them to process nearly a half a million share deals every second, earning the sector some 21 billion in 2015 and giving bank using this technology and unfair advantage in the marketplace.[6] Concerns have been raised about computerized financial services that allow high frequency traders to get faster access to information allowing firms to create sophisticated computer programs to buy and sell stocks in milliseconds, faster than any human.[7]

Western modernity (and developing Global systems) exhibit long-term tendencies of an increasing abstraction described in terms of formalization, mathematicization, aestheticization and biologization of life. These are characteristic of otherwise seemingly disparate pursuits in the arts and humanities as much as science and technology and driven in large measure through the development of logic and mathematics especially in digital systems. Much of this rapid transformation of the properties of systems can be captured in the notion of "bioinformational capitalism" that builds on the literatures on "biocapitalism" and "informationalism" (or "informational capitalism") to develop the concept of "bio-informational capitalism" in order to articulate an emergent form of capitalism that is self-renewing in the sense that it can change and renew the material basis for life and capital as well as program itself. Bioinformational capitalism applies and develops aspects of the new biology to informatics to create new organic forms of computing and self-reproducing memory that in turn have become the basis of bioinformatics.

The notion of "algorithmic capitalism" as I have previously described it is "an aspect of informationalism" (informational capitalism) or "cybernetic capitalism," a term that recognizes more precisely the cybernetic systems similarities among various sectors of the post-industrial capitalist economy in its third phase of development - from mercantilism, industrialism to cybernetics—linking the growth of the multinational info-utilities (e.g., Goggle, Microsoft, Amazon) and their spectacular growth in the last twenty years, with developments in biocapitalism and the informatization of biology. Fundamental changes are taking place with algorithmic trading and the development of so-called financialization."

I used the notion to examine and explain the phenomenon of the "Flash Crash" when the Dow Jones lost 700 points (some $800 billion)—one of its biggest one-day falls in history—and recovered within minutes.

Algorithmic trading is sometimes seen as an explanation of market volatility especially when risk is not transparent or able to be effectively tracked and monitored. Automated buy—sell programs now account for over 80 per cent of all US equity trading. Increasingly, global information systems that operate at the speed of light are now harnessed by HFT (high frequency trading) firms to create Automated Trading Desks that are capable of trading hundreds of millions of shares daily. So-called "quant trading," after "quantitative trading programs" are now designed by mathematicians and underlie HFT, where stocks are held often for only microseconds. The staggering growth of the finance industry sometimes referred to as "financialization" represents a set of overlapping processes that refer not only to the rapid expansion of the financial sector of the capitalist system—to the growth of financial institutions of all kinds—but also to a qualitative change in the mode of production where banking systems jettison traditional banking practices to become commercial investors and multinational corporations develop as financial institutions able to invest and trade directly in financial markets.

The Epoch of Digital Reason[8]

Global finance capitalism (and "financialisation") is but one prominent and rapidly growing aspect of "cybernetic capitalism." Western modernity and the developing global systems spawned by Western (neo)liberal capitalism exhibit long-term tendencies of an increasing abstraction that can be described in terms of long-term modernization

processes including the "formalization," "mathematicization," "aestheticization," and "biologization" of everyday life (Peters, Britez & Bulut, 2009; Peters, 2011). These cybernetic processes are characteristic of otherwise seemingly disparate pursuits in the arts and humanities as much as science and technology and have been driven in large measure through the development of logic and mathematics especially in the world architecture of emerging global digital systems. In this respect, we can talk of the **emergence of digital reason** and of the university in the epoch of digital reason. By this description I mean principally a set of developments in foundations of mathematics and the algebra of logic that predate the founding of cybernetics as a discipline with the 1946 and 1953 conferences sponsored by the Josiah Macy, Jr. Foundation in New York City on the subject of "Circular Causal and Feedback Mechanisms in Biological and Social Systems" (Umpleby, 2005). The prehistory of cybernetics that result in the problematic history of the development of digital logic including Boolean algebra, gates that process logic signals, switching theory, flip-flops and memory elements that store logic signals and in general the representation of binary information in physical systems. In this tangled genealogy George Boole (1847) wrote **The Mathematical Analysis of Logic** that provided the calculus for a two-valued logic, applying algebra to logic, representing true or false within assertion logic that is the basis for all modern programming languages and digital electronics. Claude Shannon discovered that the rule of Boolean algebra could be applied to switching circuits and introduced switching algebra in order to design circuits of logic gates. (The algebra of 0 and 1 was applied to electrical hardware comprising logic gates to form a circuit diagram).[9]

Digital reason is a wider and a more philosophical notion than digital logic, named here in the tradition of Kant and Foucault. It governs the historical emergence of a techno-epistemological epoch that is so recent but indicates a deep transformation of the knowledge economy or knowledge capitalism, society and knowledge institutions. Its concepts are the concepts of **speed** and **velocity**—involving limits of the physics of light—as well as **system**, **feedback** and **control**. Much of this rapid transformation of digital logic and the properties of systems can be captured in the notion of "algorithmic capitalism" (Peters, 2012a,c, 2013) as an aspect of informationalism (informational capitalism) or "cybernetic capitalism," a term that recognizes more precisely the cybernetic system similarities among various sectors of the post-industrial capitalist economy in its third phase of development—from mercantilism, to industrialism and finally to cybernetics—linking the growth of the multinational info-utilities (e.g., Goggle, Microsoft, Amazon) and their spectacular growth in the last twenty years, with developments in biocapitalism (the informatization of biology and biologization of information), and fundamental changes taking place in the nature of the market with algorithmic trading and the development of so-called "financialization".

Biologizing Digital Reason

The third phase of "cybernetic capitalism" itself has undergone further development from first to fifth generation. I described above the first four generations to the point of complexity theory. The fifth is what I call "bioinformationalism" representative of bioinformational capitalism (Peters, 2012) that articulates an emergent form of capitalism that is self-renewing in the sense that it can change and renew the material basis for life and capital as well as program itself. This represents a massive change to the notion of digital reason as also a biological notion—biologizing digital reason. Bio-informational capitalism applies and develops aspects of the "new biology" to informatics to create new organic forms of computing and self-reproducing memory that in turn has become the basis of bioinformatics. I begin with a review of the successes of the "new biology," focusing on Craig Venter's digitizing of biology and the creation of new life from the digital universe and provides a brief account of bioinformatics before brokering and discussing the term "bioinformational capitalism."

> Genomic capitalism represents a phase of global biocapitalism that, when harnessed with a new generation of information processing, itself organically enhanced, comprises a 'bio- informationalism' that expresses a new kind of utopian perfectionism about the possibilities for a new age of genetic self-renewing capitalism that is capable of programming itself (Peters, 2012: 99).

As Venter (2008) claimed:

> we've been digitizing biology, and now we're trying to go from that digital code into a new phase of biology, with designing and synthesizing life.... We've been digitizing it now for almost 20 years. When we sequenced the human genome, it was going from the analog world of biology into the digital world of the computer. Now we're trying to ask: can we regenerate

life, or can we create new life, out of this digital universe?[10]

The development of the new biology has in large measure been possible through the application of informatics to biology and more recently of the new biology to informatics, using data-intensive—so-called "big data"—to develop a "evo-devo" program that integrates biological theory across the hierarchy of life. This involves the development of a dialectic of information and biology ("bioinformatics") as a scientific logic and rationality that leads to the biologization of the digital (in the long term) and an informatization of biology.

David M. Berube reviewing J. Craig Venter's (2013) **Life at the Speed of Light: From the Double Helix to the Dawn of Digital Life** and G. Church and E. Regis' **Regenesis: How Synthetic Biology Will Reinvent Nature and Ourselves** (2012) provides the following gloss:

> We have entered the digital age of synthetic biology. With biotechnology and advanced computer information systems converging, we are at a point when we can design gene sequences, connect them into more complicated arrays, and insert them into the DNA of a developing organism, resulting in life that had not naturally evolved in the global ecosystem (p. 428).

Synthetic biology harnesses computer power in the production of genomic scientific capitalism augmenting the capacity of digital reason through organic memory and the possibility of new forms of bioinformatics. There are close connections between biology and information where forms of informational biology and biological information demonstrate how the concept of information since the 1950s has made its way into the heart of biological studies. Theorists in biology have utilized Claude Shannon's concept of information as described in his mathematical communication theory and more recently moved to introduce the notion of teleosemantics, signaling systems of the genetic code and the role of information in evolutionary processes.

My speculation is that the biologization of digital reason is a distinct phenomenon that is at an early emergent form that springs from the application of digital reason to biology and the biologization of digital processes. In this space we might also talk of digital evolution, evolutionary computation, and genetic algorithms.

Most accounts of digital capitalism that emphasize algorithmic governance or cloud storage tend to prefigure a notion that falls under what I call "digital reason" that instrumentalizes knowledge and information as a stage in the evolution and transformation of modern capitalism. Thus, Luciana Parisi (2016) in a lucid account argues:

> Algorithmic cognition is central to today's capitalism. From the rationalization of labor and social relations to the financial sector, algorithms are grounding a new mode of thought and control. Within the context of this **all-machine phase** transition of digital capitalism, it is no longer sufficient to side with the critical theory that accuses computation to be reducing human thought to mere mechanical operations. As information theorist Gregory Chaitin has demonstrated, incomputability and randomness are to be conceived as very condition of computation. If techno-capitalism is infected by computational randomness and chaos, the traditional critique of instrumental rationality therefore also has to be put into question.

She foregrounds the emergence of cognitive labor as the dominant form and also presages the financialization of life and the dominance of finance culture. Yet now we are now entering and **biocognitive** era of capitalism where "**machinic phyla** are agents productive of being" featuring "ontological heterogenesis" and "collective assemblages of subjectivity" (Guattari 2011: 50).[11] As Charles T. Wolfe (2016: 175) argues a thesis concerning the "social brain""Biological, aesthetic and we might add, cerebral machines are constitutive parts of the production of subjectivity, rather than its 'other.'" He reminds us of one kind of materialism that indicates "Brains are culturally sedimented, permeated in their material architecture by our culture, history, and social organization; and this sedimentation is itself reflected in cortical architecture"(p. 177), where creating new circuits in art or philosophy, as Deleuze contends, "means creating them in the brain" (cited in Wolfe, p. 179). Thus, the brain is ontological opening to shaping that advertises a new neuroplasticity able to escape biological determinism.

In this new era of "biocognitive capitalism" – what I refer to as "biologizing digital reason" – we encounter the realm of augmented intelligence and also "deep learning" both of which have critical consequences for digital labor. Matteo Pasquinelli (2016: 203) reminds us:

> Augmented intelligence must be distinguished from artificial intelligence, which implies a complete autonomy of machine intelligence from human intelligence despite sharing a logical and technological ground; and from swarm intelligence, which describes decentralized and spontaneous forms of organization in animals, humans, and algorithmic bots...

The second machinic moment of automation as a discernible stage that may not entirely detach itself from

augmented intelligence has the power to go beyond any human-machine interface into the realm of deep learning where human labor and life is not a requirement for production. This is the stage where automation reaches its limit creating autonomous technological **learning systems** that are able to learn from large amounts of data that are feed to it in a continuous stream and is based on incremental self-improvement in machine performance.

Endnotes

1. Multitude is a political concept at the limits of sovereign power dating from Machiavelli and Spinoza naming a population that has not entered into a social contract and retained it capacity for political self-determination and, after Hardt and Negri, resistance against global systems of power. The journal offers the following description: "The concept of "multitudes" refers to the immanence of subjectivities (rather than "identities") acting in opposition to established power structures and mapping the way for new futures.'

2. This section draws on my "Speed, Power and the Physics of Finance Capital" http://www.wpfdc.org/blog/economics/18793-speed-power-and-the-physics-of-finance-capitalism

3. See http://advancedtrading.com/algorithms/show Article.jhtml?articleID=218401501 .

4. See http://www.equedia.com/how-fast-is-high fre quency-trading/

5. See http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/8887-algorithmic-capitalism-and-educational-futures-

informationalism-and-the-googlization-of-knowledge

6. Listen to Assignment at http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p004vqkc

7. See the concerns expressed by Eric Schneiderman New York's attorney general who has called for curbs at http://www.bbc.com/news/business-26637465

8. This section is based on a couple of paragraphs from Peters (2015).

9. See Burris (2013) on "The Algebra of Logic Tradition"; O'Regan (2008) on the history of computing; and Stankovic & Astola (2011) on switching theory.

10. See http://www.ted.com/talks/craig_venter_is_on_the_verge_of_creating_synthetic_life.html

11. In particular, see the work of Andrea Fumagalli who holds that cognitive biocapitalism refers to a larger set of meanings than cognitive capitalism (Fumagalli and Morini, 2013).

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Donald Trump, Media Spectacle, and Authoritarian Populism

Douglas Kellner

In Remembrance of Ben Agger, an Honorable Critical Theorist

Explaining the Donald Trump phenomenon is a challenge that will occupy critical theorists of U.S. politics for years to come. My first take on the Trump phenomenon is that Donald Trump won the Republican primary contest and then the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election because he is the **master of media spectacle**, a concept that I've been developing and applying to U.S. politics and media since the mid-1990s.[1] In this study, I will first discuss Trump's use of media spectacle in his business career, in his effort to become a celebrity and reality-TV superstar, and his political campaigns. Then I shall examine how Trump embodies Authoritarian Populism and has used racism, nationalism, xenophobia, and the disturbing underside of American politics to mobilize his supporters in his successful Republican primary campaign and in the hotly contested win in the 2016 general election.

Donald Trump and the Politics of the Spectacle

I first came up with the concept of media spectacle to describe the key phenomenon of US media and politics in the mid-1990s. This was the era of the O.J. Simpson murder case and trial, the Clinton sex scandals, and the rise of cable news networks like Fox, CNN, and MSNBC and the 24/7 news cycle that has dominated US politics and media since then.[2] The 1990s was also the period when the Internet and New Media took off so that anyone could be a political commentator, player, and participant in the spectacle, a phenomenon that accelerated as New Media morphed into Social Media and teenagers, celebrities, politicians, and others wanting to become part of the networked virtual world joined in.

The scope of the spectacle has thus increased in the past decades with the proliferation of new media and social networking like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instangram, Skype, and the like that increases the scope and participation of the spectacle. By "media spectacles" I am referring to media constructs that present events which disrupt ordinary and habitual flows of information, and which become popular stories which capture the attention of the media and the public, and circulate through broadcasting networks, the Internet, social networking, smart phones, and other new media and communication technologies. In a global networked society, media spectacles proliferate instantaneously, become virtual and viral, and in some cases becomes tools of socio-political transformation, while other media spectacles become mere moments of media hype and tabloidized sensationalism.

Dramatic news and events are presented as media spectacles and dominate certain news cycles. Stories like the 9/11 terror attacks, Hurricane Katrina, Barack Obama and the 2008 U.S. presidential election, and in 2011 the Arab Uprisings, the Libyan revolution, the UK Riots, the Occupy movements and other major media spectacles of the era, cascaded through broadcasting, print, and digital media, seizing people's attention and emotions, and generating complex and multiple effects that may make 2011 as memorable a year in the history of social upheaval as 1968.[3]

In today's highly competitive media environment, "**Breaking News!**" of various sorts play out as media

spectacle, including mega-events like wars, 9/11 and other spectacular terrorist attacks, extreme weather disasters, or, in Spring 2011, political insurrections and upheavals. These spectacles assume a narrative form and become focuses of attention during a specific temporal and historical period, that may only last a few days, or may come to dominate news and information for extended periods of time, as did the O.J. Simpson Trial and the Clinton sex/impeachment scandal in the mid-1990s, the stolen election of 2000 in the Bush/Gore presidential campaign, or natural and other disasters that have significant destructive effects and political implications, such as Hurricane Katrina, the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill, or the Fukushima-Daiichi nuclear catastrophe. Media spectacles can even become signature events of an entire epoch as were, arguably, the 9/11 terrorist attacks which inaugurated a historical period that I describe as Terror War.

I've argued since 2008 that the key to Barack Obama's success in two presidential elections was largely due to his becoming a master of media spectacle, blending politics and performance in carefully orchestrated media spectacles (Kellner 2009 and 2012). Previously, the model of the mastery of presidential spectacle was Ronald Reagan who everyday performed his presidency in a well-scripted and orchestrated daily spectacle. Reagan was trained as an actor and every night Ron and Nancy reportedly practiced his lines for the next day performance like they had done in their Hollywood days. Reagan breezed through the day scripted with a teleprompter and well-orchestrated media events, smiling frequently, and pausing to sound-bite the line of the day.[4]

In the 2016 election, obviously Donald Trump emerged as a major producer of media spectacle (see Kellner 2016). Trump has long been a celebrity and master of the spectacle with promotion of his buildings and casinos from the 1980s to the present, his reality-TV shows, self-promoting events, and now his presidential campaign and presidency. Hence, Trump was empowered and enabled to run for the presidency in part because media spectacle has become a major force in US politics, helping to determine elections, government, and more broadly the ethos and nature of our culture and political sphere, and Trump is a successful creator and manipulator of the spectacle.

I would also argue that in recent years U.S. wars have been orchestrated as media spectacle, recalling Bush Jr's 2003 Iraq shock and awe campaign for one example. Likewise, terrorism has been orchestrated as media spectacle since the 9/11 attack that was the most spectacular and deadly attack on the US heartland in history. As we know too well, school and mass shootings which can be seen as a form of domestic terrorism, have become media spectacle with one taking place in 2015 in Virginia on live TV, while the stock market, weather, and every other form of life can become part of a media spectacle. Hence, it is no surprise that political campaigns are being running as media spectacles and that Knights of the Spectacle like Donald Trump played the spectacle to win the presidency, nor is it surprising that Trump is playing his role as president as King of the Spectacle.

Trump's biographies reveal that he was driven by a need to compete and win,[5] and entering the highly competitive real estate business in New York in the 1980s, Trump saw the need to use the media and publicity to promote his celebrity and image. It was a time of tabloid culture and media-driven celebrity and Trump even adopted a pseudonym "John Baron" to give the media gossip items that touted Trump's successes in businesses, with women, and as a rising man about town.[6]

Trump derives his language and behavior from a highly competitive and ruthless New York business culture and an appreciation of the importance of media and celebrity to succeed in a media-centric hypercapitalism. Hence, to discover the nature of Trump's "temperament," personality, and use of language, we should recall his reality-TV show The Apprentice which popularized him into a super celebrity and made the Donald a major public figure for a national audience. Indeed, Trump is the first reality-TV candidate who ran his campaign and presidency like a reality-TV series, boasting during the most chaotic episodes in his campaign that his rallies were the most entertaining, and sending outrageous Tweets into the Twitter-sphere which then dominated the news cycle on the ever-proliferating mainstream media and social networking sites. Hence, Trump is the first celebrity candidate and now president whose use of the media and celebrity star power is his most potent weapon in his improbable and highly surreal campaign and presidency.[7]

The Apprentice, Twitter and the Summer of Trump

Since Trump's national celebrity derived in part from his role in the reality-TV series The Apprentice,[8] we need to interrogate this popular TV spectacle to help explain the Trump phenomenon. The opening theme music "For the Love of Money", a 1973 R&B song by The O'Jays, established the capitalist ethos of the competition for the

winning contestant to get a job with the Trump organization, and obviously money is the key to Trump's business and celebrity success, although there is much controversy over Trump's wealth, and so far he has not released his tax returns to quell rumors that he isn't as rich as he claims, that he does not contribute as much to charity as he has stated, and that many years he pays little or no taxes.

In the original format of The Apprentice, several contestants formed teams to carry out a task dictated by Trump, and each "contest" resulted with a winner, followed by Trump barking "you're fired" to the loser. Curiously, some commentators believe in the 2012 presidential election that Barack Obama beat Mitt Romney handily because he early on characterized Romney as a billionaire who liked to fire people, which is ironic since this is Trump's signature personality trait in his business, reality-TV, and now political career, which has seen him fire two campaign managers and more advisors by August 2016 and fire his National Security Advisor, FBI Director, and others during his still young presidency.

The Apprentice premiered in January 2004, and after six seasons, a new format was introduced: The Celebrity Apprentice. The celebrity apprentice series generally followed the same premise as the original, but with celebrities as contestants participating to win money for their chosen charities, rather than winning a job opportunity with the Trump organization. There have been seven seasons of The Celebrity Apprentice since 2008, although NBC announced on June 29, 2015 that it was severing all business ties with Trump due to the latter's comments about Mexican immigrants, but has said its relationship with Mark Burnett and the show will continue, although low ratings with another celebrity/politician/show biz dude Arnold Schwarzennegger, and his public feud with the Donald, has raised questions about the show's future.

When NBC started negotiating with Trump concerning the reality TV-series in 2002, according to NBC producer Jeff Gaspin, the network was not sure that the New York-centric real estate mogul would have a national resonance and the initial concept envisaged different billionaires each season hiring an apprentice. The show immediately got good ratings and Trump became a popular TV figure as he brought the contestants into his board room in Trump Tower, appraised their performances, insulted those who did not do well, and fired the loser.[9]

The Apprentice's TV Producer Mark Burnett broke into national consciousness with his reality-TV show Survivor, a neo-Darwinian epic of alliances, backstabbing, and nastiness, which provides an allegory of how one succeeds in the dog-eat-dog business world in which Donald Trump has thrived, and spectacularly failed as many of the books about him document. Both Burnett and Trump share the neo-Darwinian (a)social ethos of 19th century ultracompetitive capitalism with some of Donald Trump's famous witticisms proclaiming:

> When somebody challenges you unfairly, fight back—be brutal, be tough—don't take it. It is always important to WIN!
> I think everyone's a threat to me.
> Everyone that's hit me so far has gone down. They've gone down big league.
> I want my generals kicking ass.
> I would bomb the shit out of them.
> You bomb the hell out of the oil. Don't worry about the cities. The cities are terrible.[10]

In any case, The Apprentice made Trump a national celebrity who became well-known enough to plausibly run for president. Throughout the campaign season Trump used his celebrity to gain media time. In addition to his campaign's ability to manipulate broadcast media, Trump is also a heavy user of Twitter and tweets throughout the day and night. Indeed, Trump may be the first major Twitter candidate and now president, and certainly he is the one using it most aggressively and frequently. Twitter was launched in 2006, but I don't recall it being used in a major way in the 2008 election, although Obama used Facebook and his campaign bragged that he had over a million "Friends" thus using Facebook as part of his daily campaign apparatus. I don't recall, however, previous Presidential candidates using Twitter in a big way like Donald Trump, although many had accounts.

Twitter is a perfect vehicle for Trump as you can use its 140-character framework for attack, bragging, and getting out simple messages or posts that engage receivers who feel they are in the know and involved in TrumpWorld when they get pinged and receive his tweets. When asked at an August 26, 2015, Iowa event as to why he uses Twitter so much, he replied that it was easy, it only took a couple of seconds, and that he could attack his media critics when he "wasn't treated fairly." Trump has also used Instagram --an online mobile photo-sharing, video-sharing and social networking service that enables its users to take pictures and videos, and share them on a variety of social networking platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and Flickr.

Twitter is perfect for General Trump who can blast out his opinions and order his followers what to think. It enables Businessman and Politician Trump to define his brand and mobilize those who wish to consume or support

it. Trump Twitter gratifies the need of Narcissist Trump to be noticed and recognized as a Master of Communication who can bind his warriors into an on-line community. Twitter enables the Pundit-in-Chief to opine, rant, attack, and proclaim on all and sundry subjects, and to subject TrumpWorld to the indoctrination of their Fearless Leader.

Hence, Trump is mastering new media as well as dominating television and old media through his orchestration of media events as spectacles and daily Twitter feeds. In Trump's presidential campaign kickoff speech on June 16, 2015, when he announced he was running for President, Trump and his wife Melania dramatically ascended down the stairway at Trump Towers, and the Donald strode up to a gaggle of microphones and dominated media attention for days with his drama. The opening speech of his campaign made a typically inflammatory remark that held in thrall news cycles for days when he stated: "The U.S. has become a dumping ground for everybody else's problems. [Applause] Thank you. It's true, and these are the best and the finest. When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. They're not sending you. They're not sending you. They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people."

This comment ignited a firestorm of controversy and a preview of Things to Come concerning vile racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, and the other hallmarks of Trump's Cacophony of Hate. Debate over Trump's assault on undocumented immigrants would come to dominate daily news cycles of the Republican primaries and would continue to play out in the general election in Fall 2016. In the lead up to the first Republican primary debate in Fall 2015, Donald Trump got the majority of media time; his daily campaign appearances and the Republican primary debates became media spectacle dominated by Trump. Every day that Trump had a campaign event, the cable news networks would hype the event with crawlers on the bottom of the TV screen proclaiming "Waiting for Trump," with air-time on cable TV dominated by speculation on what he would talk about. Trump's speeches were usually broadcast live, often in their entirety, a boon of free TV time that no candidate of either party was awarded. After the Trump event, the rest of the day the pundits would dissect what he had said and his standing vis-à-vis the other Republican candidates. If Trump had no campaign event planned, he would fire off a round of Tweets against his opponents on his highly active Twitter account—which then would be featured on network cable news discussions as well as social media.

Hence, Trump's orchestration of media spectacle and a compliant mainstream media was a crucial factor in thrusting Trump ever further into the front runner status in the Republican primaries and winning for him the overwhelming amount of media attention and eventually the Republican nomination. The first major quantitative study indicated that from mid-June 2015 after Trump announced he was running through mid-July, Trump was in 46% of the news media coverage of the Republican field, based on Google news hits; he also got 60% of Google news searches, and I will bet that later academic studies will show how he dominated all media from newspapers to television to Twitter and new media to social networking during the Republican primaries and then during the general election.[11]

At a press conference on August 26, 2015, before his appearance at a rally in Dubuque Iowa, Trump bragged about how all three US cable news networks, as well as the other big three networks and even foreign news networks, were following him around all day, broadcasting all his live campaign appearances, and even his appearance for Jury duty in New York one day (he didn't have to serve and cable news anchors led off that night with ordinary people who had been waiting all day to see if they would be enrolled to serve on a jury who were asked what Trump had been doing all day, if he'd said anything, and so on, clearly a waste of news space and sign that Trump was dominating Republican primary coverage).

The August 26, 2015 Iowa event was the day that a Univision anchor Jorge Ramos tried to interrupt Trump's press conference to challenge Trump on immigration, in which Trump had his operatives throw Ramos out, but then let him in to create another media spectacle of Trump vs Ramos as they battled it out debating immigration, letting Trump dominate yet another news cycle.

The same day, Trump bragged about how one major media insider told him that it was the "Summer of Trump" and that it was amazing how he was completely dominating news coverage. Trump also explained, correctly I think, why he was getting all the media attention: "RATINGS," he explained, "it's ratings, the people love me, they want to see me, so they watch TV when I'm on." And I do think it is ratings that leads the profit-oriented television networks to almost exclusively follow Trump's events and give him live TV control of the audience. In his 1989 book, Fast Capitalism, and Speeding Up Fast Capitalism, a sequel to his earlier book, Ben Agger presented a framework for analyzing mutations in society, culture, and politics that have made possible a Donald Trump.[12] Without a media-saturated cybercapitalism, new technologies like Twitter and social networking, and a celebrity culture that has

morphed into politics, there could never be a Donald Trump.

Trump rose to prominence in New York during the Reaganite '80s as an embodiment of wild, entrepreneurial cowboy capitalism in an era of deregulation, the celebration of wealth, and the "greed is good" ethos of Wall Street, enabled by the Reagan administration. Trump's success was tied to an unrestrained finance capital that loaned him immense sums of money, often with minimal and problematic collateral, to carry through his construction projects. Trump was an extravagant consumer with a three-story penthouse at the top of Trump Towers, a 118 room mansion in Palm Beach, Florida Mar-A-Lago that he immediately opened for TV interview segments, and an obscene array of properties. He flaunted a yacht bought from Saudi arms dealer Adnan Khashoggi, and a personal airplane to jet-set him around the world to luxury resorts. Trump was featured on TV shows like Life Styles of the Rich and Famous, and his life-style was the subject of multi-page spreads in fashion and other popular magazines, making Trump the poster-boy for excessive "conspicuous consumption," of a degree that I doubt Veblen could have imagined.[13]

Trump's financial fortunes hit the economic slowdown that followed the Reagan orgy of unrestrained capitalism in the late 1980s,[14] and in the 1990s Trump almost became bankrupt. Fittingly, Trump had overinvested in the very epitome of consumer capitalism, buying a string of luxury gambling casinos in Atlantic City. The financial slump hit Trump's overextended casinos, driving him to put them on the market. The banks called in loans on his overextended real estate investments, and he was forced to sell off properties, his yacht, and other luxury items. Having temporarily lost his ability to borrow from finance capital to expand his real estate business, Trump was forced to go into partnerships in business ventures, and then sold the Trump name that was attached to an array of consumer items ranging from water to vodka, and men's clothes to fragrances.

Throughout his career, Trump has been particularly assiduous in branding the Trump name and selling himself as a businessman, a celebrity, presidential candidate, and president. Indeed, Trump's presidential campaign represents an obscene branding of a predatory hypercapitalist into a political candidate whose campaign and presidency has been run on bombast, dominating on a daily basis the mediascape, and gaining the attention of the public. Obviously, Trump is orchestrating political theater, his theatrics are sometimes entertaining, and sometimes utterly appalling. Hence, his candidacy represents another step in the merger between entertainment, celebrity and politics (here Ronald Reagan played a key role, our first actor President). Yet Trump is arguably the first major candidate to pursue politics as entertainment and thus to completely collapse the distinction between entertainment, news, and politics. He is also the first authoritarian populist to have been a party nominee for President in recent times.

Donald Trump and Authoritarian Populism

Much has been made of Donald Trump's character and whether he is fit to be president of the United States. In the following analysis, I want to suggest that the theories of Erich Fromm and his fellow German-Jewish refugees known as the "Frankfurt School" provide an analysis of authoritarian populism that helps explicate Trump's character, his appeal to his followers, and in general the Trump phenomenon.[15]

Erich Fromm was a German Jewish intellectual and psychoanalyst who was affiliated with the Frankfurt School, a group of German Jews and progressives who left Hitler's Germany in the early 1930s and settled in the United States, developing critical theories of fascism, contemporary capitalism, and Soviet Marxism from a theoretical standpoint that combines Marx, Freud, Weber, Nietzsche and other radical theorists and critics of Western civilization.[16] Fromm was the group's Freud expert who was affiliated with the Frankfurt *Psychoanalytic Institute* in Germany, and was a practicing analyst in Germany and then the United States. After breaking with the Frankfurt school in the late-1930s, Fromm went on to becoming a best-selling author and radical social critic in the United States.

Fromm was a strong critic of Hitler and German fascism and I believe that his major books and some key ideas help explain the character, presidential campaign, and supporters of Donald Trump. Hence, in this discussion, I develop a Frommian analysis of Trump and his followers and take on the issue of how American authoritarian populism looks in the Era of Trump. This project begins with Fromm's Escape from Freedom, which explains how in modernity individuals submitted to oppressive and irrational regimes and in particular how Germans submitted to Hitler and fascism.[17] Escape combines historical, economic, political, ideological and socio-psychological analysis, as is typical of the best multidimensional work of Fromm and the Frankfurt School, and provides a model that we can apply to analyzing Trump and our current political situation.

Certainly, Trump is not Hitler and his followers are not technically fascists,[18] although I believe that we can

use the terms **authoritarian populism** or **neo-fascism** to explain Trump and his supporters.[19] Authoritarian movements ranging from German and Italian fascism to Franco's Spain to Latin American and other dictatorships throughout the world center on an authoritarian leader and followers who submit to their leadership and demands. I maintain that Donald Trump is an authoritarian leader who has mobilized an authoritarian populist movement that follows his leadership. Arguably, Trump is an authoritarian populist in the traditions of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. Like Reagan, Trump comes out of the entertainment industry and was a popular celebrity as he announced his candidacy in summer 2015 thanks in part to his television celebrity as every mainstream media outlet touted his announcing his candidacy. Trump does not share the conservative ideology of Reagan and Thatcher, although he shares their electoral strategy of taking a populist pose claiming to represent the people against the political establishment.

Yet Trump lacks Reagan's disciplined skills as a performer and Thatcher "Iron Lady" self-discipline and political rationality. Instead, Trump shoots from the lip and cannot resist insults, attacks, impolitic language and rants against those who dare to criticize or offend him. While Trump does not have a party apparatus or ideology like the Nazis, parallels to Nazism appeared clear to me watching a TV broadcast on August 21, 2015, of Trump's mega-rally in Mobile, Alabama. I watched all afternoon as the cable news networks broadcast nothing but Trump, hyping up his visit to a stadium where he was expecting 30-40,000 spectators, the biggest rally of the season. Although only 20-some thousand showed up, which was still a "huge" event in the heat of summer before the primaries had even begun in earnest, Trump's flight into Alabama on his own Trump Jet and his rapturous reception by his admirers became the main story of the news cycle, as did many such daily events in what the media called "the summer of Trump."

What I focused on in watching the TV footage of the event was how the networks began showing repeated images of Trump flying his airplane over and around the stadium before landing and then cut away to big images of the Trump Jet every few minutes. This media spectacle reminded me of one of the most powerful propaganda films of all time -— Leni Riefenstahl's Triumph of the Will ¬– a German Nazi propaganda film of 1935. Triumph focuses on Hitler flying in an airplane through the clouds, looking out the window at the crowds below, landing, and driving through mass crowds applauding him as his proceeded through the streets of Nuremburg for a mass rally. The crowds along the way and in the stadium greeted Hitler with rapture as he entered the spectacle of a highly touted and orchestrated Nuremburg mass Nazi rally that Riefenstahl captured on film.

I do not know if the Trump operatives planned this parallel, or if it was just a coincidence, but it is clear that Trump, like Hitler, has organized a fervent mass movement outside of the conventional political party apparatuses. The anger and rage that Fromm attributed to Nazi masses in Escape from Freedom is also exhibited in Trump's followers as is the **idolatry** toward their Fuhrer, who arguably see Trump as the **magic helper** who will solve their problems by building a giant wall to keep out the threatening Other, a Fairy Tale scenario that Fromm would have loved to deconstruct.[20]

Like followers of European fascism in the 1930s, Trump's supporters over the years have suffered economic deprivation, political alienation, humiliation, and a variety of hard times, and they appear to be looking for a political savior to help them out with their problems and to address their grievances. Trump proposes magical solutions like a wall along the Mexican border that will keep out swarms of immigrants that he claims are taking away jobs in the U.S., as well as committing waves of crime. Trump claims he will create millions of "great" jobs without giving specific plans —- a claim refuted by his problematic business record that includes many bankruptcies, hiring of foreign workers to toil on his projects, some of whom he does not pay, and failures to pay many subcontractors who worked on his projects.[21]

Trump thus presents himself as a Superhero who will magically restore the U.S. to greatness, provide jobs and create incredible wealth, and restore the U.S. to its rightful place as the world's Superpower. In this Fairy Tale, the billionaire King will fight and destroy all the Nation's domestic and foreign enemies and the Superman will triumph and provide a Happy Ending for the people of the U.S.[22]

While Trump plays the role of the **Übermensch** (Superman or Higher Man) celebrated by the Nazis and embodies their **Führerprinzip** (leadership principle), Trump is a very American form of the Superhero, and lacks the party apparatus, advanced military forces, and disciplined cadres that the Nazis used to seize and hold power. Like other rightwing American populists, Trump bashed the Federal Reserve, the U.S. monetary system, Wall Street hedge fund billionaires, and neoliberal globalization, in the same fashion as Hitler attacked German monopoly capitalism. While Hitler ranted against monopoly capitalists, at the same time he accepted big donations from German industrialists, as brilliantly illustrated in the famous graphic by John Heartfield "the meaning of the Hitler

salute" which showed Hitler with his hand up in the Nazi salute, getting bags of money from German capitalists. [23] Just as Hitler denounced allegedly corrupt and weak party politicians in the Weimar Republic, Trump decries all politicians as "idiots," "stupid," or "weak" – some of the would-be strongman's favorite words. In fact, Trump even attacked lobbyists, and claimed he alone was above being corrupted by money, since he was self-financing his own campaign. Of course, these claims were not really true and Trump filled his administration with lobbyists, corporate and political insiders, and other Swamp Creatures as he assembled his administration (see Kellner 2017).[24]

Trump has his roots in an American form of populism that harkens back to figures like Andrew Jackson, Huey Long, George Wallace, Pat Buchanan and, of course, the American carnival barker and snake oil salesman.[25] Like these classical American demagogues, Trump plays on the fears, grievances, and anger of people who feel that they have been left behind by the elites. Like his authoritarian populist predecessors, Trump also scapegoats targets from Wall Street to a feared mass of immigrants allegedly crossing the Mexican border and pouring into the States, overwhelming and outnumbering a declining White population.[26]

Trump's followers share antecedents in the Know Nothing movement of the 1850s, the Ku Klux Klan movement which achieved popularity and media in the 1920s, with Donald's father Fred Trump arrested at one of its rallies,[27] and the movement that made George Wallace a popular candidate in the 1960s. Like the alienated and angry followers of authoritarian populist movements throughout the world, Trump's admirers had suffered under the vicissitudes of capitalism, globalization, and technological revolution. For decades, they have watched their jobs being moved overseas, displaced by technological innovation, or lost through unequal economic development amid increasing divisions between rich and poor. With the global economic crisis of 2007-08, many people lost jobs, housings, savings, and suffered through a slow recovery under the Obama administration. The fact that Obama was the first black president further outraged many who had their racism and prejudices inflamed by eight years of attacks on Obama and the Obama administration by rightwing media and the Republican Party.

Indeed, Donald Trump was one of the most assiduous promoters of the "birther" myth, erroneously claiming that Barack Obama was born in Africa and was thus not eligible to serve as President of the United States.[28] In the 2008 presidential election, Trump made a big show of insisting that Obama show his birth certificate to prove he was born in the U.S., and although the Obama campaign provided photocopies of the original birth certificate in Hawaii and notices of his birth in Honolulu newspapers at the time, Trump kept insisting they were frauds and many of his followers continue to this day to believe the myth that Obama was not born in the USA.[29]

Yet unlike classic dictators who are highly disciplined with a fixed ideology and party apparatus, Trump is chaotic and undisciplined, viciously attacking whoever dares criticize him in his daily Twitter feed or speeches, thus dominating the daily news cycles with his outrageous attacks on Mexicans, Muslims, and immigrants, or politicians of both parties who dare to criticize him. Trump effectively used the broadcast media and social media to play the powerful demagogue who preys on his followers' rage, alienation, and fears. Indeed, by March 2016, media companies estimated that Trump received far more media coverage than his Republican Party contenders, and by June MarketWatch estimated that he had received $3 billion worth of free media coverage.[30] Yet, at his whim, Trump bans news media from his rallies, including The Washington Post, if they publish criticisms that he does not like.

Like followers of European fascism, the Trump's authoritarian populist supporters are driven by rage: they are really angry at the political establishment and system, the media, and economic and other elites. They are eager to support an anti-establishment candidate who claims to be an outsider (which is only partly true as Trump has been a member of the capitalist real estate industry for decades, following his father, and has other businesses as well, many of which have failed).[31] Trump provokes their rage with classic authoritarian propaganda techniques like the Big Lie, when he repeats over and over that immigrants are pouring across the border and committing crime, that all his primary opponents, the media, and Hillary Clinton are "big liars," and that he, Donald Trump is the only one telling the truth—clearly the biggest lie of all.[32]

Trump's anti-immigrant and racist rhetoric, his Islamophobia, and his xenophobic nationalism plays into a violent racist tradition in the U.S. and activates atavistic fears of other races and anger among his white followers. Like European fascism, Trump draws on restorative nostalgia and promises to "Make America Great Again." Thus, to mobilize his followers, Trump arguably manipulates racism and nationalism and plays to the vile side of the American psyche and the long tradition of nationalism, America First-ism, and xenophobia, wanting to keep minorities and people of color outside of the country and "in their place."

Gun rights fanatics were one of Trump's strong core constituencies and never had a candidate (who previously

had no visible connection to gun culture) so rabidly defended gun rights and attacked Clinton and Democrats who were allegedly dead-set on taking guns away from men who had little else to cling to.[33] Trump also played on the fears, grievances, and resentments of evangelicals who feared that in a secular culture their religious rights would be curtailed,[34] and nationalists who believed the nation was in decline and resented as well liberals who allegedly pushed civil rights agendas that favored people of color.

An article in The New Yorker by Evan Osmos describes Trump's followers as "The Fearful and the Frustrated" with the subtitle: "Donald Trump's nationalist coalition takes shape – for now."[35] The reporter had been following Trump's campaign and interviewing his followers and the article reveals that Trump has not only attracted Tea Party followers, but also white nationalists with journals like The Daily Stormer "who urged white men to 'vote for the first time in our lives for the one man who actually reps our interests.'" Osmos interviews all over the country other members of far right neo-Nazi, white supremacist, and ultra nationalist groups and concludes:

> From the pantheon of great demagogues, Trump has plucked some best practices -— William Jennings Bryan's bombast, Huey Long's wit, Father Charles Coughlin's mastery of the airwaves—but historians are at pains to find the perfect analogue, because so much of Trump's recipe is specific to the present. Celebrities had little place in U.S. politics until the 1920 Presidential election, when Al Jolson and other stars from the fledgling film industry endorsed Warren Harding. Two decades ago, Americans were less focused on paid-for politicians, so Ross Perot, a self-funded billionaire candidate, did not derive the same benefit as Trump from the perception of independence.[36]

Like fascists and authoritarian populists, Trump thus presents himself as the Superhero leader who can step from outside and solve the problems that Washington and politicians have created. In the form of **authoritarian idolatry** described by Fromm,[37] his followers appear to believe that Trump alone can stop the decline of the United States and make it "great" again. Over and over, Trump supporters claim that he is the only one who talks about issues like immigration, problems with Washington and politics, and the role of money in politics. Trump promotes himself as the tough guy who can stand up to the Russians and Chinese, and to "America's enemies." In the Republican primaries, he presented himself as "the most militarist" guy in the field and promised to build up the US military, and to utterly destroy ISIS and America's enemies, restoring the U.S. to its superpower status, which he says was lost by the Obama administration. Trump embodies the figure to excess of strong masculinity that Jackson Katz describes as a key motif in recent U.S. presidential elections.[38] With his bragging, chest-pounding, and hypermacho posturing, Trump provides a promise of restoration of White Male Power and authority that will restore America to its' greatness.

Macho Superman Trump will make "America Great Again" and vanquish all its enemies. Indeed, "Make America Great Again" is perhaps the defining motif of Trump's presidential campaign and presidency-— a slogan he put on his baseball caps that he handed out or sold to his supporters. The baseball hat makes it appear that Trump is an ordinary fellow, and links him to his followers as one of them, a clever self-presentation for an American authoritarian populist. Sporting a baseball cap on the campaign trail is especially ironic, given that Trump appears to have borrowed this fashion from award-winning, progressive documentary filmmaker Michael Moore who is perhaps the anti-Trump in the U.S. political imaginary. Further, in his speech at the Republican convention, this shouting red-faced, orange-haired demagogue presented himself as the "voice of the forgotten men and women" -— a Depression era phrase of the Roosevelt administration which Trump inflects toward his white constituency who believes they have been forgotten and passed over in favor of the rich, minorities, and celebrities. In his daily tweets and speeches on the campaign trail, Trump used the discourse of national crisis also deployed by classic fascist and authoritarian regimes to describe the situation in the U.S. and the need for a savior to solve all the problems. In contrast to the Nazis, however, Trump tells his followers that it's his deal-making skills as a supercapitalist billionaire which credentials him to be the President, and he induces his followers to believe he will make a "great deal" for them and "Make America Great Again."

The slogan "Make America Great Again" refers for some of Trump's supporters to a time where White Males ruled and women, people of color, and others knew their place. It was a time of militarism where U.S. military power was believed to position America as the ruler of the world—although as the ambiguous Cold War and U.S. military defeats in Vietnam and the uncontrollable spaces of Iraq and Afghanistan, this era of American greatness was largely a myth. Yet the slogan is vague enough that Trump's followers can create a fantasy of a "great" past and dream that Trump will resurrect it – a fantasy conceit nourished by many authoritarian leaders in the 20th century.

Trump is replicating this phenomenon of **authoritarian populism** and his campaign exhibits in many ways the submission to the leader and the cause found in classic authoritarian movements. Yet Trump is also the embodiment

of trends toward celebrity politics and the implosion of politics and entertainment which is becoming an increasingly important feature of U.S. politics (see Note 6). Further, Trump is a master of PR and promoting his image, and would even call up journalists pretending to be a PR agent to get gossip items planted about him in newspapers (see Note 5). More disturbing is the oft-played footage of Trump mimicking a <u>New York Times</u> reporter with a disability. [39] Indeed, there is a sinister side to Trump as well as the cartoonish and creepy side.

Trump is thus an authoritarian populist and his campaign replicates in some ways the submission to the leader and the cause found in classic authoritarian movements. In some ways, however, it is Mussolini, rather than Hitler, who Trump most resembles. Hitler was deadly serious, restrained, and repressed, while Trump is comical, completely unrestrained, and arguably unhinged.[40] Curiously, on February 28, 2016, Trump used his Twitter feed to post a quote attributed to Mussolini, which compared the Italian dictator to Trump, and in an interview on NBC's "Meet the Press" that morning said: "It's a very good quote," apparently not bothered by being associated with Mussolini. [41] There were also news clips that showed Trump speaking, chin jutting out in Mussolini-like fashion, and making faces and performing gestures that seemed to mimic characteristics associated with Mussolini.[42]

Like Mussolini, Trump has a buffoonish side which his mobocracy finds entertaining, but which turns off more serious folks. Trump is the embodiment of trends toward celebrity politics and the implosion of politics and entertainment which is becoming an increasingly important feature of U.S. politics.[43] Further, Trump is a master of PR and continues into his presidency to promote his image, the Trump organization, and the interests of his family businesses. Indeed, there is a disturbing side to Trump, and in the conclusion I will discuss how his uncontrollable ego, hyperauthoritarian tendencies, and need to create endless media spectacles and dominate the news may lead to the destruction of his presidency.

Conclusion

On May 9, 2017, Trump fired FBI Director James Comey creating the most stunning and perhaps consequential media spectacle of his presidency. There is a dialectic of the spectacle whereby those who lie by and prosper through the spectacle may undergo their downfall and destruction through media spectacles of scandal and delegitimation. Miraculously, Bill Clinton survived the spectacle of the Monica Lewinsky sex scandal and impeachment perhaps because the spectacle of the noxious Grand Inquisitor Ken Starr and a blood-thirsty Republican Congress turned public opinion to support Clinton despite his failings. Michael Jackson, by contrast, during the same era, had his career destroyed by revelations that he invited young boys to his home and bed for sleepovers. Yet after his death, Jackson underwent a miraculous resurrection of the spectacle as millions around the world mourned his death and gave his career and work an afterlife.

Trump's firing of Comey, however, has generated negative media spectacles highlighting his pathological mendacity as he claimed that he fired Comey because of the mishandling of Hillary Clinton's email problems during the 2016 presidential election. Few outside of Trump supporters believed this, however, especially after it was revealed that Comey had requested more resources to investigate the connections between the Trump organization and campaign and the Russians during the 2016 presidential election when there was strong evidence that the Russians had hacked the democrats and released embarrassing, or distracting, emails from the Clinton campaign to the press with the aid of Wikileaks (see Nance 2016 and Kellner 2017). Trump had long called the investigation a hoax and "fake news" but the very fact of firing Comey suggested that he was deeply worried about the investigation and was viciously struggling for his survival. Firing Comey, however, could lead to Trump's downfall as shortly thereafter, Special Counsel Robert S. Mueller was appointed to investigate the Trump-Russia connections and related issues.

No doubt, the many investigations into the Trump-Russia connections will be a major media spectacle of the contemporary era and perhaps one of the most momentous spectacles in U.S. history. U.S. politics are now totally bound up with the logic and dynamic of media spectacle and the fate of the nation demands on how the Trump-Russia spectacle unfolds and plays out.

Endnotes

1. On my concept of media spectacle, see Kellner 2001; 2003a, 2003b, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2016, and 2017. This article draws upon and updates my two Trump books Kellner 2016 and 2017.

2. I provide accounts of the O.J. Simpson Trial and the Clinton sex/impeachment scandal in the mid-1990s in Kellner 2003b, ; engage the stolen election of 2000 in the Bush/Gore presidential campaign in Kellner 200; and describe the 9/11 terrorist attacks and their aftermath in Kellner 2003a.

3. See Kellner 2012.

4. On the scripting of the Reagan presidency, see Cameron 1982.

5. See Michael D'Antonio, Never Enough. Donald Trump and the Pursuit of Success (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2015); Gwenda Blair, The Trumps (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000); and Michael Kranish and Marc Fisher, Trump Revealed. An American Journey of Ambition, Ego, Money and Power. New York: Scribner, 2016 . Blair's chapter on "Born to Compete," op. cit., pp. 223ff., documents Trump's competitiveness and drive for success at an early age.

6. Marc Fisher , Will Hobson , "Donald Trump 'pretends to be his own spokesman to boast about himself.' Some reporters found the calls disturbing or even creepy; others thought they were just examples of Trump being playful." The Independent, May 13, 2016 at http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-elections/donald-trump-pretends-to-be-his-own-spokesman-to-boast-about-himself-a7027991.html (accessed August 9, 2016).

7. For my take on celebrity politics and the implosion of entertainment and politics in U.S. society, see Kellner, in Marshall and Redmond, pp. 114-134. See also Wheeler, 2013. The best study of Trump, the media, and his long cultivation and exploitation of celebrity is found in. O'Brien 2016 [2005].

8. Trump's book The Art of the Deal , co-written with Tony Schwartz (New York: Ballantine Books, 2005 [1987]), helped introduce him to a national audience and is a key source of the Trump mythology; see Blair, op. cit., 380ff.

9. Gaspin was quoted in CNN, All Business. The Essential Donald Trump . September 5, 2016.

10. Quotations from Chairman Trump, edited by Carol Pogash. New York: Rosetta Books, 2016, pp 30, 152, 153.

11. Ravi Somaiya, "Trump's Wealth and Early Poll Numbers Complicate News Media's Coverage Decisions." The New York Times , July 24, 2015 at http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/25/business/media/donald-trumps-wealth-and-poll-numbers-complicate-news-medias-coverage.html (accessed July 22, 2016).

12. Ben Agger, Fast Capitalism (Champaign-Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989) and Speeding Up Fast Capitalism (New York and London: Routledge, 2015).

13. Thorstein Veblen, Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study in the Evolution of Institutions . New York: Dover, 1994 (1899).

14. For the story of Trump's financial down-fall and near collapse in the 1980s and 1990s, see the detailed and well-documented narratives in Barrett, op. cit.; John O'Donnell and James Rutherford, Trumped!: The Inside Story of the Real Donald Trump-His Cunning Rise and Spectacular Fall . New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991;D'Antonio,op. cit; andKranish and Fisher, op. cit.

15. The analysis of Fromm and Trump was first presented as "Fromm and the Counterrevolutionary Character: Frommian Reflections on Donald Trump" in a conference "The (in)sane society: Remembering Erich Fromm and the Frankfurt School," CUNY, New York, April 1, 2016

16. On Fromm, see Daniel Burston, The Legacy of Erich Fromm. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1991; Rainer Funk, Erich Fromm: His Life and Ideas. Translators Ian Portman, Manuela Kunkel. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2003; Lawrence J. Friedman, The Lives of Erich Fromm: Love's Prophet . New York: Columbia University Press, 2013.

17. Erich Fromm, Escape from Freedom. New York: Holt Paperbacks, 1991 (1941).

18. Parenthetically, there were enough media comparisons between Trump and Hitler and fascism for Trump to say with some perhaps genuine perplexity "I'm not Hitler! I don't like the guy!" See Sam Sanders, "Trump Champions The 'Silent Majority,' But What Does That Mean In 2016?" NPR, January 22, 2016 at http://www.npr.org/2016/01/22/463884201/trump-champions-the-silent-majority-but-what-does-that-mean-in-2016 (accessed on July 20, 2016). At this time, Trump was asking his followers to raise their hands if they would vote for him as President, and the simultaneous raised hands going up looked like a mob of Hitler salutes! And there is a story out there that Trump keeps a book of Hitler's writings by his bedside; see O'Brien, op. cit., p. 200; the story originates from a UPI report, August 9, 1990, cited in O'Brien, op. cit., p. 260.

19. Carl Bernstein started calling Trump a neo-fascist and an American-brand fascist on CNN on June 19,

2016. See Tom Boggioni , "Carl Bernstein: Donald Trump is a 'pathological liar' and America's first 'neofascist' nominee," Rawstory, June 19, 2016 at http://www.rawstory.com/2016/06/carl-bernstein-donald-trump-is-a-pathological-liar-and-americas-first-neofascist-nominee/ (accessed on July 20, 2016). In an article by Adam Gopnik, "Being Honest About Trump, The New Yorker , July 14, 2016 at http://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/being-honest-about-trump (accessed on July 20, 2016), Gopnik comments: "It is the essence of fascism to have no single fixed form—an attenuated form of nationalism in its basic nature, it naturally takes on the colors and practices of each nation it infects. In Italy, it is bombastic and neoclassical in form; in Spain, Catholic and religious; in Germany, violent and romantic. It took forms still crazier and more feverishly sinister, if one can imagine, in Romania, whereas under Oswald Mosley, in England, its manner was predictably paternalistic and aristocratic. It is no surprise that the American face of fascism would take on the forms of celebrity television and the casino greeter's come-on, since that is as much our symbolic scene as nostalgic re-creations of Roman splendors once were Italy's." Op. cit.

20. The notion of "the magic helper" to whom the follower submits in the hopes their problems will be solved is found in Erich Fromm's Escape from Freedom , op. cit., pp. 174-178; on "authoritarian idolatry," see Sane Society, op. cit. p. 237f. Escape from Freedom not only critiqued Nazi ideology, the party apparatus, the concept of the Fuhrer, and the psychology of Nazi mass followers of Hitler in Escape from Freedom , but was also fascinated by fairy tales and magical thinking in National Socialism, a theme he expanded in later writings like The Forgotten Language: An Introduction to the Understanding of Dreams, Fairy Tales and Myths . New York: Random House, 1988.

21. On Trump's business failures, see Wayne Barrett, Trump: The Greatest Show on Earth: The Deals, the Downfall, the Reinvention . New York: Regan Books, 2016 (revision of 1992 book Trump: The Deals and the Downfall); O'Brien, op. cit.; D'Antonio, op. cit.; David Cay Johnston, The Making of Donald Trump. New York: Melville House ; and Kranish and Fisher, Trump Revealed, op. cit . See also and "The Art of the Bad Deal. Donald Trump's Business Flops, Explained," Newsweek, August 8, 2018: 24-33,

22. On the centrality of the role of a Superhero in U.S. culture and politics, see Robert Jewett and John Lawrence, The American Monomyth . New York: Anchor, 1977 and Robert Jewett and John Lawrence, The Myth of the American Superhero. Grand Rapids, Mich: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002. Trump's campaign follows this model of the redemptive Hero who will slay America's enemies and return the Kingdom to peace and prosperity.

23. See the Heartfield images at https://www.google.com/search?q=John+Heartfield:+the+meaning+of+the+Hitler+salute&biw=1600&bih=1028&tbm=isch &tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjt4K vV-N7LAhVM6WMKHUPABGMQsAQIJg (accessed March 22, 2016).

24. After bragging how his campaign was self-funded during the Republican primaries, Trump released a statement showing that much of the money he spent was paid into his own companies; see Nicholas Confessore and Sarah Cohen, "Donald Trump's Campaign, Billed as Self-Funded, Risks Little of His Fortune." The New York Times, February, 5, 2016 at http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/06/us/politics/donald-trumps-campaign-billed-as-self-funded-risks-little-of-his-fortune.html?_r=0 (accessed July 29, 2016). During the Fall Presidential election, Trump is forced to court donors and raise funds, thus undercutting his claims to be the only self-financing candidate.

25. See Lauren Langman and George Lundskow, "Escape From Modernity: Authoritarianism and the Quest for the Golden Age," Paper delivered at "The Psychodynamics of Self & Society," Eighth Annual ASA Mini-Conference, Seattle, August 18, 2016.

26. Trump's vision of Latin American immigrants pouring over the border into the U.S. is a fantasy, as studies have shown that more Mexicans are returning to Mexico after working in the U.S. than coming into the country, illegal or not; see A na Gonzalez-Barrera, "More Mexicans Leaving Than Coming to the U.S. Net Loss of 140,000 from 2009 to 2014; Family Reunification Top Reason for Return." November 19, 2015 at http://www.pewhispanic.org/2015/11/19/more-mexicans-leaving-than-coming-to-the-u-s/ (accessed September 3, 2016).

27. Kranish and Fisher, op. cit., pp. 27-28. It was not clear from police and media reports whether Fred Trump was marching with the Klan or was just part of the crowd that got involved in a melee with the police.

28. On the birther myth, see Michael D'Antonio op. cit, pp. 283ff.

29. Public Policy Polling reports that a "new poll finds that Trump is benefiting from a GOP electorate that thinks Barack Obama is a Muslim and was born in another country, and that immigrant children should be deported. 66% of Trump's supporters believe that Obama is a Muslim to just 12% that grant he's a Christian. 61% think Obama was not born in the United States to only 21% who accept that he was. And 63% want to amend the Constitution to eliminate birthright citizenship, to only 20% who want to keep things the way they are." Public Policy Polling. " Trump Supporters Think Obama is A Muslim Born in Another Country," September 01, 2015 at http://www.publicpolicypolling.com/main/2015/08/trump-supporters-think-obama-is-a-muslim-born-in-another-country.html (accessed August 3, 2016).

30. Nicholas Confessore and Karen Yourish, "$2 Billion Worth of Free Media for Donald Trump,"

The New York Times, March 15, 2016 at http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/16/upshot/measuring-donald-trumps-mammoth-advantage-in-free-media.html?_r=0 (accessed August 6, 2016)and Robert Schroeder , " Trump has gotten nearly $3 billion in 'free' advertising." Marketwatch, May 6, 2016 at http://www.marketwatch.com/story/trump-has-gotten-nearly-3-billion-in-free-advertising-2016-05-06 (accessed August 6, 2016).

31. On Trump's business failures, see Note 16 above.

32. At the Republican convention, Trump insisted that "you won't hear any lies here," For documentation of Trump's Big and little lies, see Hank Berrien, "Lyin' Donald: 101 Of Trump's Greatest Lies," Dailywire , April 11, 2016 at http://www.dailywire.com/news/4834/trumps-101-lies-hank-berrien (accessed August 8, 2016).

33. On Trump's appeal to gun owners, see Daniel Hayes, "Donald Trump Takes Aim," The New York Times, August 20, 2016 at http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/21/opinion/campaign-stops/donald-trump-takes-aim.html?_r=0 (accessed August 24, 2016).

34. In an article subtitled "How the Christian right came to support a thrice-married adulterer," see Daniel K. Williams "Why Values Voters Value Donald Trump," The New York Times, August 20, 2016 at http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/21/opinion/sunday/why-values-voters-value-donald-trump.html (accessed August 24, 2016).

35. Evan Osmos "The Fearful and the Frustrated: Donald Trump's nationalist coalition takes shape – for now" The New Yorker , August 31, 2015 at http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/08/31/the-fearful-and-the-frustrated (accessed July 22, 2016).

36. Osmos, op. cit.

37. On Fromm and "authoritarian idolatry," see Fromm, 1955, p. 237f.

38. See Jackson Katz, Man Enough? Donald Trump, Hillary C, and the Politics of Presidential Masculinity . Northampton, Mass.: Interlink Publishing Company, 2016.

39. See the video at CNN, http://www.cnn.com/videos/tv/2015/11/26/donald-trump-mocks-reporter-with-disability-berman-sot-ac.cnn (accessed August 9, 2016).

40. In a classic example of Freudian projection, over the weekend of August 6-7, Trump accused Hillary Clinton of being unbalanced, coming unhinged, and being mentally unstable, previously the charges being deployed against Trump which I discuss below using Fromm's categories. See Jose A. DelReal , "Trump, in series of scathing personal attacks, questions Clinton's mental health," Washington Post, Aug. 7, 2016 at https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2016/08/06/trump-in-series-of-scathing-personal-attacks-questions-clintons-mental-health/ (accessed August 10, 2016). In a speech in West Bend, Wisconsin, on August 16, 2016, Trump called Clinton a "bigot," a charge frequently tossed at him.

41. Maggie Haberman, " Donald Trump Retweets Post With Quote From Mussolini ," The New York Times, February 28, 2106 at http://www.nytimes.com/politics/first-draft/2016/02/28/donald-trump-retweets-post-likening-him-to-mussolini/   (accessed August 8, 2016).

42. Media Matters S taff, "Ted Koppel Compares Donald Trump To Benito Mussolini. Koppel: Trump And Mussolini Both 'Say Very Little In Terms Of Substance, But The Manner In Which They Say It Gets The Crowds Excited,'" Media Matters , December 16, 2015 at http://mediamatters.org/video/2015/12/16/ted-koppel-compares-donald-trump-to-benito-muss/207564 (accessed August 9, 2016).

43. For my take on celebrity politics and the implosion of entertainment and politics in U.S. society, see Kellner, in Marshall and Redmond, op.cit, pp.114-134.

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5 Minutes to Hell. Time to Tell the Truth. The Disintermediated Doctoral Student

Tara Brabazon

> It's probably always been true that you have to find your way through or around formal education in the search for what really matters (2011, 190).
>
> — Jonathan Dollimore

It is not a great time to be working in higher education, or as I have recently termed it, the Zombie University (Brabazon 2016). Brains are consumed and the only solution is to run away from the threat. It is even less pleasant to be committed to—and believing in—doctoral education. Many "universities" are blurring and aligning with further education institutions, forging a post-expertise university. (Higher) education and training merge, compress and conflate.

Stanley Aronowitz's The Knowledge Factory (2000) – the theoretical dystopia he summoned in 2000 – is now the operating system in our universities. Senior managers in higher education are no longer drawn from the database of outstanding teachers and researchers. These men and women have taken the third path—administration—to "manage" academics and scholarly portfolios in areas in which they have not themselves been successful. What happens to supervision, students and supervisors in this post-expertise knowledge factory? How can we manage power and research dissemination in a different way? How can we claim our space, claim our expertise and fight back against an anti-intellectual wave? How can we balance individual expertise and excellence against co-learning and collaboration? (Sze n.d.) In response to these questions, this article is theoretical and practical, political and punchy, providing strategies that confirm the role and place of standards, rigor and excellence in the modern university. My goal is to ensure that there remains a space and place for high quality doctoral education. I argue that supervisors, doctoral candidates and universities deploy digitization and online learning in a way that increases the reflection, research capacity, and rigor in a PhD program.

My title is used with intent. Five minutes to hell—time to tell the truth—is derived from the final episode of series 9 of Doctor Who (Moffat 2015). The Doctor travelled to the end of the universe, attempting to save the life of his companion Clara. He failed, but met the last immortal – Ashildr – who reminded him with stark honesty, "Five minutes to hell. Time to tell the truth" (Moffat 2015, 53). This seems profoundly appropriate at this point in the history of universities. If we lose the standards within our doctoral programs, then we lose the point of our institutions and our future: to create and enable the scholars who will replace us. The context in which this succession planning is taking place may be described – at best – as tumultuous. Imogen Tyler confirmed that, "we are living through a turbulent period in world history in which several man-made catastrophes including environmental change, peak oil, terrorism and warfare and global economic recession, are converging with ruinous consequences" (2013, 5). We are five minutes to hell. Time to tell the truth.

The death of Ben Agger—a friend, advisor, editor and personal inspiration—has provided the initiative for this article. His commitment to entwine and align complex theorizations of the political economy with media transformations has provided leadership for generations of scholars and scholarship. Yet it is Ben Agger as a teacher and doctoral supervisor that I wish to summon, remember, and acknowledge in this article. His international role as a rigorous and respectful examiner changed the lives of many of my doctoral candidates and hundreds of emerging

scholars. Therefore, in this issue of Fast Capitalism, I continue to recognize the international contribution of Ben Agger and offer recognition of his contribution to doctoral education through supervision and examination.

Like much of Agger's research, popular culture can summon these unpalatable truths for education, teaching and learning. Pop can be banal, discriminatory or disposable. It can also be Thinking Pop (Brabazon 2008) and high popular culture (Redhead and Brabazon 2015). Throughout its analogue and digital history, fans have used, abused, appropriated, rewritten and refashioned pop for their purposes (Brooker 2002). A range of theories have summoned this complexity, including Stuart Hall's <u>Encoding and Decoding</u> (1980), Henry Jenkins' <u>Textual Poachers</u> (1992) and Constance Penley's <u>Slash Fiction</u> (1992). Social media have intensified this dialogue between pop and society, production and consumption. Rarely though is popular culture used as a trigger, model and frame to understand doctoral students, supervisors and our higher degree programs. Building these connections generates and disseminates knowledge, but also shapes career networks, developing skills and an academic profile. Such insights and inflections also create interdisciplinary doctoral studies (Manathunga, Lant and Mellick 2006).

This is a difficult era for PhD students and their supervisors. The neoliberal university has little interest in the highest levels of scholarship and achievement. "Quality" is deployed as a marketing device and to mitigate risk management. Doctoral students are valued for their financial contribution and are only visible when there is a risk to institutional branding and profile (Lovitts 2001). The recent case at the University of Wollongong is a clear example of the challenging space within higher education (Lawrence 2013). Popular culture is a mechanism to open new spaces for innovation, rigor, creativity and scholarship.

The subtitle of my article—the **disintermediated doctoral student**—reveals the innovative spaces that are available to supervisors and our institutions. These strategies empower our students and supervisors, and also undermine the authority held by "academic managers," via a flood of tweets, Facebook posts, podcasts and vodcasts. Students and supervisors can "answer back" to the powerful. This transparency is important, as so much of doctoral education remains individualized, atomized and masked behind wider institutional priorities. Frank Furstenberg stated that, "despite a large and ever-growing number of studies on academia and 'how-to' books and blogs, I am always amazed at how little newcomers know about what goes on behind the academic curtain" (Furstenberg 2013). To understand this volatile power relationship, my article is structured into two parts. Firstly, I activate three elements in the modern doctoral experience: digitization, deterritorialization, and disintermedation. These three variables are transforming doctoral education. After this foundational work, I discuss five social media examples that may be transformative for students, supervision and the university sector. The goal is not that doctoral candidates use and apply all these platforms, but they should explore the customized options that may be relevant for different students at different stages of their candidature.

Digitization, Deterritorialization, and Disintermediation

Digitization has many characteristics. The most important for doctoral education is mobility. Ideas can move through space and time. For rural and regional areas, this is a particularly important characteristic. Nations are dominated by global and second tier cities (Brabazon 2014). Most universities are positioned in these urban environments. Yet third tier—small—cities that house universities manage unique challenges. The flaws and weaknesses in analogue infrastructure can be managed through digitization. Certainly, the original uses of the internet were very basic: electronic mail (E-Mail), file transfer, bulletin boards and newsgroups. Even from this very basic start, the early functions involved connection and communication over geographical space, just as other technological advances allowed the passage through geographical space in the last 200 years, like railways in the 19th century and cars in the 20th. This was an innovative repurposing and recalibration of space and time. Similarly, the digital movement of ideas is fast and convenient. This can be a major problem at times: there is a proliferation of digital material—much of which is low quality (Gleick 2011) —requiring high levels of information literacy and the necessity for what I describe as Digital Dieting (Brabazon 2013). That which is fast dominates the slow, but this maxim has consequences for all workers, including doctoral supervisors and their students.

There is no single web or internet, and while too simple in terms of designation and definition, for the purposes of this article, I split the web into Web 1.0 and Web 2.0, noting that this both reifies and simplifies the changes to the online environment. Web 2.0 is also described as the social web, social media or social networking. It is a different mode of screen-based communication. Web 2.0 captures the movement from the read web to the read write web.

Post-blogging, the readers of websites could also write web-based material with simple coding enabled through WordPress and Drupal. This article probes the impact of this shift from producer to consumer in the doctoral supervisory environment, but also the transformation to supervisory spaces. When reading Johannes Willms' Conversations with Ulrich Beck, published in 2004, Beck used digitization as a proxy for a wider social model. He stated that, "we occupy a world of transportation and communication networks in which social and physical space have diverged" (Beck and Willms 2004). This moment of digitization, often described as deterritorialization, has been reconfigured through disintermediation, reintermediation (Brabazon 2014) and the re-emergence of analogue places via geosocial networking.

From this digital intervention, deterritorialization emerged. In the early 1990s, Sherry Turkle wrote perhaps the most famous book in the early phase of the internet, titled Life on the Screen (1995). This phrase captured the meaning of deterritorialization. We no longer (only) occupy a body in real space and time, but are also living a life on a screen that connects us to a network. Who we are in and on Pinterest is distinct from our Twitter handle, our Facebook page or LinkedIn profile. Deterritorialization refers to the way in which particular media platforms and communication systems de-emphasize and de-center our position in real space and time in favor of a virtual space and time. Our bodies may be located in Auckland, but we can skype a friend in Singapore. Time can be shared, rather than space.

While the telephone and the satellite were the 20th century manifestations of deterritorialization, the best and most pervasive platform for deterritorialization is the internet and the applications that emerge from it. But, the digitized screen specifically disconnects bodies from performed identity. It separates our analogue existence from the digital performance through screen, sound and text. This is a two-way movement.

1. The internet, web and read-write web deterritorializes an audience from their physical location.

2. The internet, web and read-write web reconstitutes us as an imagined online community.

Fascinating but also unstable compromises are reached between digital and analogue modes of organizing space, time and identity. These changes matter to supervisors because new meeting modalities—sharing time and not space—can take place. Skype and Adobe Connect allow innovative strategies to connect students separated by analogue boundaries. Such relationships and connections are important because the more regular the supervisory meetings, the more likely the postgraduate is to finish. The more regular the meetings, the faster the candidature.

While the experience of doctoral education, including meeting and working with other students on campus, is incredibly valuable, there is now an array of post-geographical options to enable a successful supervision. One example I developed and deploy at Flinders University is the Write Bunch. This is a group of geographically dispersed doctoral candidates enrolled at Flinders who join together once a week for thirty minutes of sustained writing. It is a silent thirty minutes, yet the candidates' share the time of writing, while not sharing the space of their candidature. They can see their fellow writers and gain support.

The Write Bunch shows the new options that can emerge for candidates through digitization, even beyond weekly meetings with supervisors. The key is to ensure that synchronous meetings take place, creating a schedule and a pattern of connectivity. It does not matter if these meetings are analogue or digital.An array of social connections can be created through Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, meaning that a postgraduate community can be formed. The most innovative universities create virtual coffee shops for students and – through Skype or Adobe Connect – boot-camp writing sessions for postgraduates (Doctoral Support Group 2017). Also, a podcast or vodcast library of seminars, training or ideas for reading, writing and completion can be accessed as required (OGR 2017). The key is to focus on synchronous meetings with supervisors, to create the micro deadlines for the completion of work, and then deploy an array of asynchronous resources when they are required to keep the candidature fresh and exhilarating. Digital doctoral supervision—from the initial skype meeting of prospective supervisors through to email exchange of PhD writing through tracked changes—has increased the nodes of connectivity possible during a candidature. Such a portfolio of options extends far beyond the online learning strategies deployed for undergraduates at the end of the twentieth century and the first few years of the twenty first century, such as Blackboard, where low quality and basic interfaces were imposed onto and through degrees because of the increased casualization of staff (Standing 2013) and to reduce the costs of face-to-face learning.

The final key term cutting through digitization and deterritorialization is disintermediation, which is a characteristic of peer to peer networks. Links are removed from the traditional supply and distribution chain. In conventional business models, multiple layers and roles are involved in designing, creating, branding, marketing and the retail selling of a product. The person who sells lipstick did not develop the chemistry to make it. The person who designed a chair did not build it or sell it. In the online environment, many of these layers between producers and consumers are either collapsed or removed. The key attribute of disintermediation is that it flattens power structures (Darling-Hammond 2010). It increases the nodes of engagement between student and supervisors, which may result in a greater array of exploitative behavior and bullying on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. However, it also has the countervailing purpose of reducing the mystique, aura and "god-like" status of the supervisor. This corrective is important. If exploitation, bullying, discrimination, and inequality enter that supervisory space, then the hopes, expectations, and aspirations of doctoral students are destroyed. Disintermediation can increase the scrutiny of supervisors and the visibility of their behaviour and actions.

Disintermediation has transformed the music and publishing industries, alongside banking, stock trading, and the purchase of hardware and software. Some industries remain wedded to an analogue supply chain. Real estate, for example, still deploys real estate agents. The impact of disintermediation on schools and universities is difficult and ambivalent to map and track. Through Facebook and Twitter, academics can work with students directly, outside the confines of both institutional portals and the physical buildings of a university. Disintermediation is a flat model with many causes and origins. One is Google. The search engine enabled the explosion of user generated content. More precisely, Google ensures that the content from blogs, wikis, podcasts, and vodcasts can be found. The challenge is that a culture of equivalence was created between sources, creating what I have described as "the Google effect" (Brabazon 2008). This phrase refers to the inability to discriminate between low and high-quality information because of the sheer scale of data that is available. The key historical point in the Google story from a user's perspective is that the web became easier to use, but there was also a transformation in the understandings of "quality," "popularity" and "usefulness." Therefore, supervisors are working in a post web 2.0 environment, managing these cycles of digitization:

§ **Deterritorialization**. Ideas, products and money move through space, while consumers create new communities through sharing time.

§ **Disintermediation.** Links are lost in the supply chain between producers and consumers through digitization.

§ **Reintermediation.** New "middlemen" have been created, like Amazon and Google which now shape how producers reach consumers, and students engage with research.

Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, Scribd, GoodReads, Snapchat, LinkedIn, ResearchGate, and Google+ provide new modes of connection, intimacy, and relationships. The issue for doctoral supervisors is to manage the challenge of expertise. Disintermediation flattens media and expertise. The reduced confidence in expert intermediaries—that aligned information and communication systems—started to corrode with an awareness of disintermediation. Indeed, David Nicholas asked, "Why read something when you can ask a friend?" (2012, 30).

The answer is that friends are often wrong. Also, this peer-enabled disintermediation is unhelpful in recognizing the specific skills and knowledge for a doctorate.

Disintermediation allows doctoral students to develop new pathways to information and people. It also offers a mechanism to reorganize the power relationships between supervisor and students. The power relationship is flattened. This means that power is removed from supervisors, and students have an array of new relationships and nodes and modes of dissemination. While change is always challenging, particularly in a period where regulation and governance of doctoral regulation is in flux, there are some great opportunities. The second half of this paper offers five platforms and interfaces that are useful to doctoral students. Not all students will find any or all of these strategies useful, but for a supervisor needing an intervention to move a student through to the next stage of the thesis or their career, they may be appropriate and important.

The key is to configure a mechanism to assess appropriateness, significance, and value. One key set of guiding principles was developed by A.W. Bates. This checklist, based on his experience in the Open University in the UK, was deployed for the proto-digital age. I argue that it still provides a workable strategy for assessment.

Assessment of Educational Technology

- Cost

- Learning effectiveness

- Availability to students

- User friendliness

- Place in the organizational environment

- Recognition of international technological inequalities (Bates 1993)

What this checklist demonstrates is that the domestic availability of hardware and software is the key determinant of value. The key strategy is to find a way to weave institutional priorities into individual goals. It seems appropriate therefore, to begin with the disintermediated platform with the most history in doctoral education.

Examples and Models for the Disintermediated Doctoral Student

Blogs

Blogs are the grandfathers of social media. Reaching profile and popularity in 1999, this was the key first moment when the readers of websites became the writer of websites. The software enabled this movement. WordPress and Drupal allowed intuitive writing of text, with the easy embedding of images through a WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) format. Blogs became more attractive and interactive through the arrival of an array of services like Flickr and YouTube that enabled the embedding of personal and third-party content with ready-made code.

The advantage and indeed the challenge in the use of blogs for doctoral students is that they are hyper-personal, like a public diary. Such a format activates a confessional modality. Therefore, as supervisors, we must exercise care and support specific students in their use of blogs and offer caution for students who are yet to configure the correct mix between personal life and their emerging professional responsibilities as a scholar. If students complain and blame in a way that blocks the completion of intellectual work, then a blog may not be useful and will be detrimental to their doctoral completion.

There are five powerful uses of blogs for PhD students.

(a) As a reflective diary on the PhD process

Recent research demonstrates that the students who generate a rapid and successful doctoral thesis reflect on the process of doctoral supervision throughout the candidature. This reflection process can be regular conversations with supervisors, using social media groups on Facebook or Twitter, or blogging. As Tuure Tammi and Anna

Kouhia reported, "Doctoral students' experiences of their own doctoral processes, in particular, have been shown to contribute to students' well-being and satisfaction, thus increasing their perceived fit into academic communities" (2015, 386). The challenge is to ensure that the reflection is towards the completion and the process, rather than personal issues that may hamper the rapid completion.

A great model to share with students is the Edu Flaneuse (2017). Also tweeting as @debsnet, she blogged during her doctoral candidature right through to completion. It helped her understand the process and other doctoral students were assisted by her words. To find examples or templates that may suit students, it is valuable to refer to the Thesis Whisperer's fine list of strong blogs (2017).

(b) As a scrapbook or pinup board

The gathering of information in multimodal form is often difficult to organize, even with a range of software. The advantage of a blog is that it can be organized by both date and keywords and can maintain an array of embedded links. Interpretations can be offered and updated, alongside comments from interested followers. This emerging subgenre is also a form of pin board—working like Pinterest—with students curating their sources as they reorganize them in new ways for their thesis.

Curation is a way to find, manage and disseminate content and for students involved in an array of interdisciplinary areas—such as digital sociology and digital ethnography—this rich online data requires selection, consideration and organization. Also, I do recommend the use of Pinterest Boards for students. The red pin link operates through all online searches and can categorize the links in real time for later review.

(c) As a digital fieldwork diary

With clear ethics discussions with a supervisor and privacy settings in place, the blog can provide a way to house fieldwork information and interpretations. The dynamic nature of digital documents means that interpretations can be overlaid through the candidature. Newbury and Stanley confirmed that the great benefit of a digital fieldwork diary is that it provides an information scaffold—a strategy—to write the thesis in an organic way (Newbury 2001). It avoids the "writing up" phase, ensuring that writing is embedded into and through the entire candidature.

(d) An incremental developmental record, particularly useful for creative-led research projects

For creative-led projects, blogs are ideal. My student Mark Brown is developing a mobile musical device to enable dancing and movement classes in schools. As a creative-led and practice-led doctorate, the process of artefact development is integral to the method. For examiners, it is crucial to be able to monitor and see the development of the prototype and a blog is an ideal way to develop a method, disseminate the method and provide a transparent and welcome opportunity for examiners to evaluate the original contribution to knowledge. Therefore, the blog can be a container that holds YouTube clips, podcasts, photographs and looped reflections on methods (Brown 2017).

(e) Managing plagiarism and intellectual integrity while regulations catch up with the modern doctorate.

While the other advantages of blogs presented in this article are useful for the writing process of a PhD, there is another use that will be increasingly valuable. Many university regulations either ignore, marginalize, or mis-configure plagiarism and academic integrity policies for doctoral students. In terms of institutional reputational damage, plagiarism in research higher degree theses—located and reported by international examiners—is the most damaging form of academic misconduct that a university can face. Yet the research higher degrees portfolio offers particular challenges when managing academic integrity, academic misconduct and plagiarism, most notably, what is "assessable work"? Clearly, the final thesis is "assessable," but are the weekly drafts exchanged between supervisor/s and students? Through this ambiguity, an under-recognized problem is that this lack of regulation and governance results in bullying, discrimination and mistreatment of PhD students. In one of my former roles, my responsibility was to manage cases of plagiarism. A PhD supervisor at this university reported plagiarism in a draft of a chapter submitted to her by a student. The status of this document was difficult to determine. Was it "submitted" work? Was it "assessable" work? The supervisor insisted on prosecuting the case. The undergraduate regulations were completely unprepared to manage this issue. It also became clear that the student had an impairment that was logged by the university, but not understood by the supervisor. It was a very complex case to resolve. But it is significant

to recognize that—for the student—blogging would have confirmed the development of his ideas over time. While text matching software like Turnitin can provide a blunt instrument for the student in terms of prevention, blogs can demonstrate and perform the development of ideas and information literacy over time.

Screen cultures, including Skype, YouTube and Periscope

Visuality is the promiscuous mistress of media. Visuality proliferates through our culture. It is used well. It is used badly. But it can also be used as the default way to express information, share ideas and (supposedly) express the truth. Digitization has deterritorialized and disintermediated visual cultures. These tendencies have increased the number, scale and scope of visual cultures through an array of screens. For this article, I defamiliarize visuality, rendering it strange and – with reflection - show its uses in doctoral education.

Our senses gather information: touch, taste, smell, hearing, and vision. The challenge is that visual media and visual modes of communication dominate other forms of sensory information. We lose taste, smell, and even touch through screen culture. There is an empire of the senses (Howes 2005). Visuality is granted greater attention than other signs. Digitization has increased this dominance. We live amid screens and screen culture. Through schooling we are taught visual literacy when we learn to read. Therefore, visual literacy is our most advanced literacy.

For doctoral candidates, there are specific gifts of visuality, particularly through YouTube and Periscope. We have a free window into the presentations and ideas of the best scholars in the world. YouTube fragments the audience and blurs the division between the present and the past. By playing a video from the past in the present, intellectual time becomes fluid and changeable. Morley Winograd and Michael Hais argued that, "[YouTube] significantly lowering the cost of creation and providing an inexpensive way for the aspiring artists to share their work" (2008 169). This content creation builds social relationships and also corrodes brittle university hierarchies. Doctoral students gain from this fragmentation and narrowcasting. There are so many uses. Innovative and historically extraordinary lectures can be watched from any location in the world. Primary and secondary sources can be accessed or vlogs viewed where students reflect on their doctoral journey. Periscope is a live capture of events—with a time limitation—like snapchat. It particularly has potential for ethnography. But YouTube has a greater array of functions. Students can record their own visual materials and receive feedback.

Most social media and social networking are screen enabled and accessible through the mobile phone. There are many reasons and motivations for social networking, maintaining friendship, and extending contacts beyond physical relationships, building an identity, and gaining confidence. Facebook is integral to this screen based culture. Such functions have a use for doctoral students. PhD groups have been formed, some based on disciplines or language groups, offering advice and support (OWLs 2017). These are the equivalent of digital coffee shops and are particularly valuable for part time and distance/online students.

Screens bring students together or separate them. But the challenge for doctoral candidates is to ensure that sharing does not lead to oversharing. Disintermediation should enable light and shade, humour and seriousness. But it is important—particularly for doctoral students—to differentiate between learning and leisure (Brabazon 2014). Miriam Metzger and Andrew Flanagin believed that the lowering of barriers in software and hardware through the domestication of digitization alters our definition and capacity to define credibility (2013). Traditional media—such as scholarly monographs and Literature—embedded theories of class, high culture and elitism. Now with the google effect—the flattening of expertise—we are in a post-expertise environment which poses specific challenges for doctoral education. In such an environment, there is a social networking site that enables disintermediation but also builds a scholarly community

Academia.edu

There are many research-inflected services of value to doctoral students, including ResearchGate. When pondering disintermediation for doctoral students, Academia.edu is the most functional channel that allows students to present their research and communicate with peers and international scholars. Qualifications can be presented, alongside university affiliations and publications.

Yet there are other important uses. Keywords are carefully used and can be followed, so rare, specialist and specific topics can be accessed. This is incredibly useful, as scholars post drafts—prepublication research—that PhD students can use at speed. Further, PhD students can post drafts that can be found by scholars around the world. The other great strength is that every Google search for the candidate's name and research can be logged, alongside the location of the searcher. Also, the number of readings of each piece can be tracked. Academia.edu is a social

networking site, but with benefits. Students can gain a sense of the audience for their work.

Podcasts

We forget how recently the iPod and podcasts entered our lives. Robin Mason and Frank Rennie's <u>Elearning: The Key Concepts</u> (2006) does not have an entry for podcasts. The book was published in 2006, the year podcasts moved from a <u>Guardian</u>-inspired neologism and into popular culture. Early academic use of iPods continued the decades-long practice of recording lectures for students who missed a session. Through the last five years better uses of sonic media emerged, rather than simply as medication for poor attendance.

Podcasts are an opportunity to connect theory and practice, thinking and doing. The advantages are clear: podcasts are inexpensive to produce. They build community and add emotion to education. As the Open University has shown through their history, sound-only teaching resources defamiliarize the way in which students think about ideas. With the eyes at rest, easy visual literacy is not an option. For difficult intellectual work that is abstract, sonic media platforms are often an option, slowing the students down and encouraging alternative modes of thought. Perhaps the most important role that sonic media and podcasts hold is that it can build relationships. It creates a sense of community and a collective ownership and care for students. Intriguingly, the close-to-invisible area in the sonic media literature is the role of podcasting in doctoral education. The goal is to find new ways to chart and validate student development through their supervisory journey. Sonic media provides an opportunity so that their voices and views are heard.

Podcasts in doctoral education offer a wide array of potentials and advantages. They build confidence and motivation and provide a sonic diary of their ideas. For example, one of my current students, Anne McLeod has 47 podcasts, gathered since her first meeting (Brabazon 2017). She has a full record of her improvements through the candidature. She speaks the argument, receives real time feedback and writes her research while listening to her podcasts. There is also the issue of the oral examination, the viva. One great advantage of podcasts is that it offers an information scaffold to socialize the students into answering questions and talking about their research.

Our current cohort is the first group of post-podcasting postgraduates to enter doctoral programs. Creating a customized podcasting strategy for PhD students generates incremental, gradual, supportive and relaxed spaces to talk about research from the start of their enrolment. The sonic strategies can include a dynamic and robust question and answer session. However, a more gentle and ongoing recording of their ideas and results is often a better map of the supervisory process.

Twitter

The ambivalent consequence of deterritorialization and disintermediation is that users build a social network of friends and distribute content to them. Because social networking is public, the textual and visual displays confirm both connection and popularity. This is an odd cultural movement. While social networking and social media are now part of popular culture, the criteria by which we assess its effectiveness and usefulness are yet to be determined. The information literacy challenge is not only one of moving content between media spaces but also through times. How do we balance the speed of microblogging services like Twitter, while enabling reflection and interpretation? This is a compressed environment—an accelerated culture—to enable information literacy (Redhead 2004).

The fast dominates the slow (Virilio 1989), and Twitter is the fastest disintermediated platform for doctoral students. This poses risks. An unwanted or problematic tweet can cause damage to their professionalism and credibility. Therefore, as supervisors, we should make them aware of the quite sizeable risks and insist on caution. Twitter is a digital rehearsal for analogue intellectual generosity in their future academic or professional lives.

The benefits are enormous and efficient in terms of time. The first strength of twitter is for social networking. Many scholars around the world maintain a twitter handle, so students can be at a campus and yet connecting with key researchers in their field. These scholars can be followed, which means that students are able to manage deterritorialization and activate disintermediation, by directly contacting influential researchers.   This sharing of experience and socialization into academic life remains challenging. Digital strategies can create analogue opportunities and behaviours.

> Three of the PhD students interviewed were nowhere near a transition to a legitimate scholar. In fact they were all in the middle of a very frustrating process, to a certain degree considering whether to continue or not. A common denominator of their experience is that they are very alone and more or less forced to adapt unilaterally to the wishes of the supervisor (Bogelund and de Graaff 2015).

Besides corresponding with influential scholars in a convenient and rapid way, peer to peer conversations are also incredibly valuable. The hashtag #phdchat curates these tweets. There is also an #ecrchat which is excellent, offering advice, interesting links and community for early career researchers. The challenge for many PhD students is they enter Twitter with only a few followers and feel isolated rather than empowered. Supervisors can help students through this stage by offering key advice with regard to hashtags. A key way to find new connections is through shared scholarly interests. Therefore, Twitter hashtags are a key strategy to hook into diverse communities and build a career. If the supervisor is also active on Twitter, online invitations can take place.

The final great gift of Twitter is as a digital pointer to richer material. Students can promote and share their articles, podcasts, vodcasts or blogs through Twitter, creating both triangulation and an increased audience for their scholarship. Twitter is still only 140 characters. It is not the place to develop high theory, complex methods, or discussions about ethics. It is the place to meet people, follow interesting scholars and discover new sources. The strength of disintermediation is that it promotes the voice of our doctoral students and enables engagements with peers, supervisors and international researchers.

Doctoral Disintermediation

Doctoral education is also an identity journey for the student and supervisor. Disintermediated media can enable students and their supervisors to create bespoke options to suit their candidature, career, and supervisory relationship. Doctoral education is the gold standard of teaching and learning, the best of what we create at a university. The success of that completion is determined through the supervisor and student relationship. This is an unequal relationship and this power imbalance can be abused. Yet through disintermediated media, the hierarchical relationship can be flattered and also rendered more complex.

Within our neoliberal universities, the future is not a fordist doctoral program, but customized, reflexive and dynamic media strategies, to enable a completion and the doctoral candidate's career beyond it. Digital doctoral supervision—from the initial skype meeting of prospective supervisors through to email exchange of PhD writing through tracked changes—has increased the nodes of connectivity possible during a candidature. The key is for the student and supervisor to assess the digital resources that are available and select the platforms, software and hardware, while also being aware that such digital supervision extends an already long working day for the supervisor (and student). As Daniel Miller confirmed, "What email achieved (a position then reinforced by subsequent media such as texting) was the overthrow of more than a century of infrastructural reinforcement of a strict division between work and non-work" (2016 37). That flexibility is useful for part-time students, but particularly challenging for already full-time academic staff. While the working day extends for academic supervisors, there remains value in placing the emphasis on learning and the learning cultures of doctoral students. Neoliberal universities place the emphasis on efficiency and cost-cutting in teaching and learning, with its most obvious manifestation being casualization of academic staff. Similarly, when the focus is placed on educational technology and how it is administered, the focus on learning moments and teaching excellence is decentred (Bennett 2003). Whitehead's warning remains significant: "when teaching you will come to grief as soon as you forget that your students have bodies" (1942). Even through digital supervision, the corporeality of supervisor and student—alongside an understanding of their working day—is necessary.

Supervising doctoral candidates in a way that respects their agency, individuality and careers —often operating against the damaging ideologies of globalization and neoliberalism—while validating international standards and scholarship achievement, remains the great challenge of this decade. Oppositional andragogy is more complex to execute in doctoral programs, because international standards must be maintained. This is a particular mode of internationalization. International mobility—of quality, examination, supervisors and students—is important. International mobility—of money, management models and Key Performance Indicators—is not relevant to maintaining excellence in doctoral education. Diverse and complex interpretations of globalization must be summoned that do not discredit governance protocols and rely on international companies and "commodification" to determine the standards of scholarship.

Ben Agger committed to excellence, empowerment, interdisciplinarity and internationalization. He believed in the importance of doctoral education to create a more social just university sector. Those of us following in his footsteps to create an emancipatory, radical and progressive doctoral education must—and this is the counterintuitive

ideology—affirm, support and configure strong regulation of our programs. Recognizing and validating the standards of supervisors—verified via a supervisory register, research training programs, professional development and continual evaluation of their research activity—works against downsizing, casualization, outsourcing and flexible labor. Doctoral candidates are more than the fees they pay to a neoliberal, globalizing economy. Supervisors are more than teachers paid by the hour. We need to summon, affirm, and celebrate counter-narratives of internationalization, mobility and digitization to welcome alternative and contested models of excellence and achievement.

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A Jeremiad for Ben: Things Fall Apart

Scott G. McNall

This contribution honors the memory and work of our friend and colleague Ben Agger who died in July 2015. Ben would have had a lot to say about the 2016 campaign and its shocking result---the election of Donald Trump to the Presidency. The following is written in the spirit of his later writings, which were provocative and forceful but grounded always in critical theory. This is what I imagine he might have said and the counsel he might have offered us.

The day after Trump's victory, two flyers landed on doorsteps in Missoula, Montana. One flyer decried Jewish control of the media; the other demanded "Free Healthcare for the White Working Class."[1] Both flyers were from the American Nazi Party. Both are revealing. Trump had promised throughout his campaign that he was going to end Obamacare, yet here were some of his supporters asking for something that President Obama and the Democratic Party had been attempting to implement for years---universal health care. In this case, though, the Nazis wanted universal and free health care just for **white** people. The second flyer simply amplified what Trump had claimed throughout the campaign and would continue to claim---the "crooked" media were against him. The Nazis added the fillip that it was the Jewish media that sought to undo the manly Trump.

Manliness was an issue in the campaign. A poll conducted by the Public Religion Research Institute found that 50% of all men felt that society was becoming too soft and feminine, while 74% of Trump supporters believed this. Trump supporters were also most likely (65%) to say that what the country needed was a leader who would break the rules.[2] Trump had the endorsement of the National Rifle Association and assured his supporters that their guns would never be taken away from them. Trump voters wanted a declared tough guy.

There is no way to pretty up the face of some of the forces that carried Trump to victory. He consistently legitimated racism, homophobia, misogyny (that "nasty" woman), and xenophobia. He claimed a right to manhandle women's body parts because of his fame, insisted that climate change was a hoax perpetrated by the Chinese, promised to undo regulations that limited the use of fossil fuels, get tough with our enemies, renegotiate trade deals, and so forth. Not everybody who voted for Trump was a racist, of course, but he was endorsed by the KKK and the more hysterical of the alt-right grandees, such as Steve Bannon, executive chairman of Brietbart News, a major source of right-wing paranoia. Bannon served as Chief Executive of Trump's campaign and was tapped by Trump to serve as his chief strategist and senior counselor in the White House. This is an ominous sign.

There are many ways to understand why the entire heartland of America turned red while the East and West Coasts, Indian reservations, and scattered college towns like Madison, Wisconsin, Missoula, Montana, Ann Arbor, Michigan, Columbus, Ohio and Lawrence, Kansas stood out as blue beacons of the left. Trump also took states that had long voted for Democrats---Iowa, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. Why the sweep? Let me list some of the factors.

Trump was and is a master of simultaneously mystifying and simplifying the complex nature of both the global economy and the way in which our political system actually works. He promised better "deals" on treaties and trade agreements without any apparent understanding of how Congress works and laws are made. Never mind. His supporters thought that with a stroke of his pen a new economic dawn would break. Like the demagogue Huey Long before him, he promised a chicken in every pot.[3] He promised workers at a Carrier plant in Indiana that he would stop Carrier from moving to Mexico and save 1400 good-paying jobs. What he "saved" was a total of 730 jobs after Carrier received credit for 300 administrative and engineering jobs that were never intended to be sent to

Mexico and after the state of Indiana promised $7 million in tax breaks for the company. Carrier, however, then proceeded to close another Indiana plant shifting 1000 jobs to Mexico. [4] He promised that coal jobs would return to Appalachia. Did any of his followers understand that the vast majority of coal jobs have disappeared because of automation? That coal is dwindling as a percentage of our energy supply because natural gas is cheaper? Did Trump even know?

Trump claimed he was the master of "The Art of the Deal." And most of his supporters wanted in on the deal! Never mind how he got his money, or the fact that he is notorious for going bankrupt, stiffing the little person; they want in. Trump, of course, represents a distorted version of the American Dream of working hard and moving up in the world. He may or may not have worked hard but he started with an elite education, inherited riches and connections from his father that gave him a head start the average American doesn't have. They bought his braggadocio that he alone had built his fortune, whatever it proves to be.

Trump's support came from a deep-rooted backlash, long in the making. Few remember Seattle in 1999, the first and largest demonstration in the U.S. against the World Trade Organization (WTO), globalization, the destruction of the environment, and the loss of jobs to low-waged countries. Anarchists marched with environmentalists; labor activists and union members joined their ranks. The broad-based coalition represented divergent class interests, all aligned against what was perceived to be an international corporate elite that did not respect nationhood. The reality, however, was that despite continued mobilization against it, globalization and its handmaiden, finance capital, would continue apace. Bill Clinton's presidency began with a full-court press to develop a neoliberal agenda---a middle way---for the U.S. Clinton removed restrictions on banks by repealing the Glass-Steagall Act, in place since 1933, designed to prevent banks from engaging in risky behavior. Some believe repeal of the act led to the ultimate collapse of banks and the need to bail out those too "big to fail," in 2008. Ordinary people lost the value they had tied up in the homes; some lost everything. Did anybody go to jail for the crimes committed against the American people? The answer is well known: No! And those who suffered have not forgotten.

A lot of steam was taken out of protests that had been building against globalization when the 9/11 attacks occurred and we went to war. We have now been at war for 15 years and there is really no end in sight. Trump claims he is going to build up our military strength---we will not be kicked around anymore! Like President Nixon's Vice President, Spiro Agnew, he intends to bomb to oblivion Muslims he has labeled as "savages." Yet, we have already squandered national resources and international prestige in our attempts to "bring democracy" to the Middle East. Many of those men and women who chose to fight in our wars have come home bitter from what some of them considered to be an unwinnable war; and some have found themselves homeless in America. Meanwhile, these wars took attention away from problems important to working Americans.

Working Americans' fears of globalization were stoked in the 2000 campaign by the paleoconservative, Pat Buchanan, running on the Reform Party ticket. His campaign bore a striking resemblance to that of Trump—pro-America, anti-trade, tax cuts for the rich; in short, a form of right-wing populism. The populist position of Trump is not a class-based populism; it cuts across diverse groups of Americans, although its energy comes primarily from whites in small towns, rural areas, and those in America's rust belt. It is isolationist and it looks backward to an imagined "The Waltons," or a "Little House on the Prairie," past. It celebrates family, faith, and the American flag. It is a rejection of cosmopolitanism, corporate and government elites, and everybody who is not a white American.

Let us not forget the role of Bernie Sanders in all this. It is important to understand that in some respects his appeal to voters, primarily young and diverse Americans, was not totally dissimilar to Trump's appeal to whites. Trump promised to "drain the swamp" of Washington lobbyists and career politicians. Sanders raged against entrenched elites who were the paid hacks of powerful corporations. He promised college students a free education and universal health care for everyone. He promised to stop the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) in its tracks, because it would ship American jobs overseas. Trump and Sanders were crafting their own utopian visions for America---one looked backward, the other forward.

And then there is Hillary. As a number of progressives have pointed out, the wave of Sanders' supporters told us that Clinton was a flawed candidate. Yes, she was one of the most eminently qualified people to ever stand for the presidency. Yes, her candidacy was weakened by Russian interference in our national election with the help of Wikileaks; James Comey, director of the FBI, shipwrecked her candidacy with his 11th hour letter to Congress, and then a retraction too late to help her. Nevertheless, Clinton had real baggage. She was a career politician; she represented the status quo; she supported neo-liberal economic policies; and was embroiled in concerns about the Clinton Foundation. The relentless Republican attacks took their toll, but in fact she did not offer a vision, utopian or not, about what "stronger together" might actually mean. Why else would even 8% of the African American

vote in Florida go to Trump? As he said to African-Americans, "what do you have to lose by voting for me?" The national media also deserve some of the blame for her defeat. By focusing on the outrageous behavior of Trump they failed to do their job to help voters understand just how impossible to implement some of his claims were. As the hedge-fund manager Peter Thiel put it, Trump's voters took Trump seriously but not literally while the media took him literally, but not seriously.

The polls leading up to the election, wrong as they were about who would win, held ominous portents. White people now embrace a victimhood status. Men, especially, imagine themselves to be victimized by women, immigrants (for taking away their jobs), anybody who was "cutting in line" ahead of them. As Arlie Hochschild explains in her Strangers in Their Own Land, people have been drawn to groups like the Tea Party and have frequently voted against their class interests simply because they believed they had been good, patriotic, Americans.[5] They have worked hard and placed value on family and faith. They had been waiting patiently in line for their turn, and then seen the Federal government reaching a hand out to those in the back of the line---minorities, immigrants, Black Lives Matter protesters---people not like them. It simply wasn't fair. Trump played to these sentiments. Much to the shock of the intellectuals and the wealthy, anger was deep and broad. Cultural conservatives, including Evangelicals, crossed their fingers and voted for Trump because he told them the game was rigged and he was going to fix that. For a number of Americans, the cultural wars were not over; they deeply resented political correctness, special protections for the LGBT community, and challenges to their religious beliefs.

There were also the facts on the ground. Wages had stagnated for the working and middle-classes. Fifty-eight percent of all income growth was going to the top 1% of income earners. Wealth gaps had deepened; college costs were increasingly taking a larger share of a family's budget; white middle-aged American's health was declining; and opiate and drug addiction was destroying families and communities. The state was not protecting its people. Exit polls found that 72% of Americans—whether Democrats, Independents, or Republicans—agreed the economy is rigged to the advantage of the rich and powerful, and a full 57% said they don't identify with what America has become.[6]

As reporters fanned out across America to find out why people had voted for Trump, even when many of his positions clashed with their own values, one respondent said, "I feel the American people are at the point where they've had it, and this was the last chance."[7] A number of union members rejected the advice of their leadership and voted for Trump. Voters in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Michigan who had voted for Obama in 2004 and 2008 went for Trump. The reason they gave for switching was simple: Obama had promised Change, with a capital C, but from their perspective little had changed---finance capital was triumphant, jobs continued to vanish, the rich were getting richer. The Washington elite had failed them. It was time for an outsider, no matter how bizarre some of his ideas and behavior were.

It is important to understand that votes against globalization and change are not a vote against capitalism. They are not even a rejection of the capitalist state. Rather they are a vote for what William Davies has termed a **protectionist state**.[8] People want the state to take care of **them**, not immigrants, or people of color, or women who chose abortion. They don't want the state to privilege people who are not **them**. This election was about a country at the end of empire and a last gasp attempt to restore it to an imagined past. The Republican Party, whose policies and practices are at variance with the social and economic desires of their new party members, now has to figure out how to embrace their cause. Will it? It is more likely we will see a protracted and messy clash between what Trump promised and what a House and Senate controlled by Republicans is willing to give.

 Predicting what Trump will do is hard, given the erratic nature of his behavior and his mid-night attempts at policy making via Twitter. In the first month of his administration we witnessed chaos and attempts to seek revenge on anybody who had not supported him during the primaries or the general election. His appointment of Stephen Bannon, Kellyanne Conway, and Sean Spicer to critical positions in the White House signaled his desire to control all decisions and to continue to push a toxic message of racism and xenophobia. His advisers were happy to support his fantasies with "alternative facts" that his inaugural crowd was bigger than anybody else's; that his electoral win was the greatest since Reagan; that he would have won the popular vote if millions of illegal immigrants had not voted for Clinton; and so on. When the main-stream media challenged these "facts," Trump claimed they were being "so unfair," and that they were the ones, not his team, pushing "fake news."

His assault on the body politic continued in other ways. He nominated people for cabinet posts to oversee programs they had spent their careers attacking, or appointed people to positions who had no clue or experience managing such a division. Even Ben Carson expressed bemusement as to why he had been nominated to head up HUD (Housing and Urban Development.) Trump's initial budget plans also reveal mean-spiritedness. Though it

would save only an infinitesimal amount, he proposed eliminating the National Endowment for the Humanities and funds for public radio. After all, who among his followers needed these?

Trump's personality is such that he cannot, apparently, brook any challenge to his authority or brilliance. He alone knows what needs to be done in the Middle East. He is a brilliant Commander in Chief who will develop new strategies for engagement. If Obama left him with an improved economy, he'll take credit for it. He has already taken credit for the jobs to be created by corporations already planning to expand their U.S. operations. As one cartoonist portrayed him, he is a cock crowing on the dung heap in the morning, taking credit for the sun rising.

There are two ways change can go in the near future. One is that the massive contradictions in what Trump has promised and what he can deliver to ordinary citizens will cause his base of support to wither. The contradictions between Trump's positions and those of the standard bearers of the Republican Party could contribute to a rollback of the Republican stranglehold on the body politic in midterm elections. But we should not count on this.

The other way change can go is mass mobilization of the left to reform the Democratic Party and the Democratic Central Committee. The good news is that resistance was rapid in coming. The day after the inauguration millions of women across America marched protesting Trump's election. The day Trump's Executive Order came barring refugees and citizens from seven Muslim countries, protests and marches broke out at airports across the country. The ACLU saw donations climb in one month by seven-fold. Planned Parenthood donations increased. Scientists marched in support of facts. This is a battle that will engage many Americans, some who have never been involved before, but it is one that has the potential not only to revive an agenda focused on equity but one that helps to build a sense of community and purpose.

We are back to where some of us started in the 1960s, with an uphill fight worth embracing across class lines. We need to continue to fight for social justice and be clear why a neoliberal regime is not going to deliver it or economic prosperity to the majority of Americans. We need to explain in every possible forum that tax cuts for the rich have **never** translated into economic growth or prosperity; on the contrary. We cannot let the gains achieved by environmental or social justice groups be rolled back. Above all we need to know that by sticking together we can create the kind of change we want.

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Ben Agger was a Blazing Intellect

Stephen Turner

Ben Agger was a blazing intellect, whose work provides important lessons—moral lessons, if that is not too pretentious—about the life of the mind and the way to live it. I was made aware of Ben by John O'Neill, who in his usual off-hand way mentioned that he might interest me. I met him only when he was an assistant professor at Buffalo, in the hall during an ASA meeting. We instantly took a liking to each other. He was almost exactly my age, and full of life and intensity. We had a bond, of an odd kind that bears directly on the lessons of his life. We were outsiders, both "sociological theorists" at a time when the field was in a peculiar kind of flux: the best of times and the worst of times. The best part was this: the 1970s, in which we were formed, saw the end of two hegemonic empires, those of Parsons and Merton. It also saw the digging of the grave of sociological positivism. This opened up a range of possibilities, not the least of which was the one Ben seized: the application of literary theory. The worst parts were the remaining hangovers from the past.

Ben was a precocious participant in the wide-ranging debates of the early seventies. He gave his first paper in Dubrovnik in 1972, "Of Style and Speech in the New Age," signaling a lifelong interest. He attended, as I did, the 1974 World Congress of Sociology in Toronto, and published a scathing critique of it, attacking the narcissism of sociologists' self-congratulation about being scientific, noting the often amusing confrontation of East and West at a time when the Communist bloc countries treated these international meetings as carefully watched contests between their side and the Western other, and calling for an engaged sociology in the style of C. Wright Mills.

The critique reflected what were to be lifelong commitments. But it is important to know what they meant at the time, and how the experience of the time formed him. At the time of this meeting, the official structures, especially in the US, were still dominated by the near-retirement students of Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton, who were eager to pass the mantle on to the like-minded, of which there were very few. Generational conflict was intense. In Toronto there were testy exchanges with older sociologists, some of whom had careers dating back to the 1930s and were on their last mission.

We, however, had youth on our side. Our opponents were a cartel, powerful, but at the end of the line. Nothing made this clearer than the volume officially sanctioned by the ASA called Approaches to the Study of Social Structure (1975), on what was taken to be the core intellectual contribution of this cartel and the core of sociology and sociological theory, but what amounted to a festschrift for Merton. It was edited by his acolyte Peter Blau, already in his late fifties, and came out of these same meetings. To this might be added Merton's own paper justifying his career (1975), written at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences. Many of these papers, and Merton himself, struggled to differentiate Merton's "structuralism" from plain structural functionalism, and failed. They were clearly on the defensive. Yet there was to be one last great gasp from this generation, which had deep consequences, and to which I will return shortly.

In the intellectual milieu in which Ben was formed, the battle lines were clear, and it was also clear that they were battle lines. Ben took a position on the Left flank of the new generation. In the period between these meetings and 1982, a year whose significance will become clear, he published a book and nine articles or chapters, several of which were in highly respectable places, including two in Polity, and two in Dialectical Anthropology, at the time an especially lively place to be. He was on the rise, and continued to produce at an astonishing rate for the rest of his life. But to paraphrase Marx, people make their own history, but they don't make the conditions under which it is made. And it is these conditions that make Ben's choices both meaningful and remarkable.

The Approaches volume was, not surprisingly, dominated by older men, most of whom were born about 1918

and were in the twilight of their careers. Many of them were to participate in the next stage of the theory drama. Their efforts were designed to continue their hegemony into the next generation, an effort thwarted by the fact that their students had rebelled against them. Harriett Zuckerman, Merton's wife, recalled the late 1960s and 70s as the "killing the fathers" period, and it clearly caused Merton himself great pain. In his correspondence one finds both enraged but unsent replies to youthful critics who had written to him, and careful corrections mixed with barely muted anger of the interpretations even of his sympathizers when they verged on criticism. Parsons died in 1979, but in his last years did nothing to conceal his disdain for the young, or at least the vast majority of the young, who regarded him as toxic. I gave a paper at a workshop for the theory section of the ASA in the Montreal meeting (with a Presidential address by Peter Blau) that followed the World Congress. When I quoted Levi-Strauss, Parsons, who, astonishingly, was in attendance, shouted out "bullshit."

We were looking elsewhere for inspiration. The reaction to our leaving the reservation was brutal. No departure from orthodoxy, it seemed, even by the lowliest graduate student from the most obscure university, was too small to be assailed. This was just the open disdain: the real warfare was in the trenches of reviewing. The entirely unobjectionable book I published with Regis Factor on the reception history of the fact-value distinction (1984) was originally submitted to Cambridge, where I had published already (not without the drama of having to discredit a hostile referee, which the editor, Robin Williams, had the grace and decency to overrule), and the first review was ecstatic. The second review was unremittingly hostile, accusing us of ideological sins we had never heard of. They sorrowfully rejected it. The same sequence was repeated at the University of Massachusetts, with the same result. This story was repeated over and over for all of us, and it is what forced Ben to publish where he did.

This was all hidden in the cloak of editorial secrecy. The public instrument of the cabal's revenge was Jeff Alexander, and his carefully orchestrated emergence as a star, author of a four-volume magnum opus entitled Theoretical Logic in Sociology (1983-4), with volumes on something like the philosophy of science, Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and Parsons, the new protective canon. For those who did not live through this event, I will try to capture its impact. Alexander was only a few years older than we were, and certainly of the same generation. Both of us had Ph.D.'s before his, in 1978. Before this work, he had not published much—an ASR article on Parsons, and three or four other pieces in much less central journals. Ben had published much more than Alexander, and it must be said, was rewarded for it with an appointment to Buffalo, a department which was congenial both to theory and radicalism, and in which he flourished. But the emergence of Alexander changed the circumstances, or showed how they had already begun to change.

One can imagine the shock, when entering the ASA annual meeting book exhibits, of seeing large placards proclaiming the arrival of a new theoretical messiah. The dead hands of the recent past were laid on Alexander like an apostolic succession. The dust jackets for these books have probably long disappeared from the library shelves, but a few quotations can give the flavor. Daniel Bell opined that the book had "magisterial range" and that "we may yet have here a new master in the offing." Seymour Martin Lipset, from the Merton side, said that "there can be no question that Alexander's book is both brilliant and original." Alvin Gouldner wrote that "The publication of this work will be a major event in the lives of American Sociologists," Lewis Coser that "The man reads and writes with enormous sophistication, lucidity, and theoretical penetration." There were many more in the same vein, by the same crowd.

In retrospect, the praise and the brazenness of the promotion of these books reeks of a kind of desperation. But it was also an in your face act of revenge for a decade and a half of criticism and rejection. I had my share in this criticism, and the rejection was deserved. There had been flashes of insight and even brilliance in the generation that was passing. But the bad ideas and scholarly horrors outweighed the good. Needless to say, they were not amused when the younger generation began to pick these works apart. But they still had power, the power of a cabal, and they used it. They used it, in the end, to burn the house of theory down. Alexander's volumes did not spark a renaissance. Instead they were brutally critiqued by his contemporaries, and his ambition to be "Parsons, Jr," (1983) as Alan Sica entitled his AJS review, was derided. But there was another consequence. The Approaches volume was theory from the commanding heights, theory that every sociologist was supposed to have a stake in, know, respect, and use, as the core of the discipline. From the 1980s on, there was a successful attempt, starting at the top of the discipline, to marginalize theory and, as I have documented elsewhere (2012), to de-intellectualize the discipline.

John Levi Martin is our witness to this act of defenestration. He explains how theorist theory, or what he calls "theory-ology," the business of critical engagement with other theorists, become the kind of "theory that we all hate." He notes that

at one time it was common for every theory department to have 'a' theorist... But by the time I left school there had been a clear shift in hiring procedures in graduate departments, which stopped thinking they need 'a' theorist, and started thinking that someone who was smart and well-educated in theory, even if she was more closely associated with an empirical research program, would be preferred. (2015, 2)

The new mantra was that "Theory is too important to be left to the so-called theorists, along with 'we are all theorists'" (2015, 3). The idea, as he explains, "was to put a stop to theory-ology," i.e., the study and critique of theorists for its own sake, to reduce the social distance from theorist (i.e., their status), and to put down epistemic criticism in favor of "the prevailing epistemic understanding … that was common to mainstream sociology in the eighties" (2015, 4).

In the 1970s, it still seemed that the hard but right path for someone like Ben was replacing the cabal and its works with a better, more open, and more Millsian sociological theory. But this assumed that theory would retain its status in the profession and that it was also something that could be presented to "the public." As the younger generation gained in stature through their works, they discovered that this was wrong. The citadel was empty, but no one cared about theory, at least in the traditional high-status departments of sociology. Indeed, the disdain of the cabal had become institutionalized in the new anathema that had been pronounced on theory.

This was the situation Ben faced. He was committed to the ideas of his 1974 commentary on the World Congress. But sociology could no longer be, as it was for Mills, a straightforward vehicle for these commitments. Ben could have gone elsewhere, and bracketed academic sociology. In a sense, in the end of his career, he did. But much of his work reflected a commitment to the idea of sociology rather than real-existing (and increasingly depressing) sociology, and with the world that sociological thinking had created: he was concerned with the sociological construction of reality, in such books as Socio(onto)logy (1989), and with the prospects of reforming sociology to speak again to the public, as in Public Sociology (2000).

What were his options? The roads he did not take included a kind of Marxism that briefly flourished in the 1970s and 80s in which the idea of the proletariat was to be saved by casuistical analyses of new class fractions. He did not, as many did, simply join the specialist historical communities that still cared about Durkheim and Weber and engaged in the thankless (certainly thankless to sociology) task of cleaning the Augean stables of bad interpretation left over from the Parsons-Merton era. Nor did he turn to epistemic critique, which was not only equally thankless and disdained, but which had the added disability of being a waste of intellectual effort: the subjects of the critiques, people like Blau, had made their errors out of incompetence and arrogance, the same attributes that prevented them from understanding and responding to the critiques. Moreover, the errors were so bizarre and convoluted that it was difficult to extract general lessons from the activity of critique. Nor did he choose the one path that could lead to professional success: to become the mouthpiece of one or another European theorist or movement. Nor did he give up, as so many did, including many one-hit wonders, people who had done some good work, but didn't have the heart to continue.

Engagement was another problem. It is something of an oddity, but on reflection not surprising, that many of the people in this situation who sought an engaged sociology became engaged closer to home, where they had some chance of making an impact: in university administration. Ben took on enormous responsibilities at Buffalo, ultimately serving as Chair. He was an institution builder and contributor his whole career. His editing work endures.

So, of course, does his published work. Unlike some of those who sold out and conformed to the new reduced model of theory, he produced continuously, expanded his horizons, used literary theory as a sword, responded to the feminist revolution, and stayed the course. His citations exceed those of some prominent "theorists" by more than an order of magnitude. He arose from the wreckage and prevailed. He found an audience, despite the fact that the audience had vanished from sociology. And in all this he held to the path he had hoped sociology would take when he wrote on the 1974 World Congress.

Pouring one's life out in the service of an ideal has a certain nobility apart from the way the world responds. Ben lived the theoretical life. There were few who could be counted as his peers in this respect. He never flagged, and never gave in. And it worked. He also kept his sense of humor and proportion. When William Outhwaite and I prevailed on him to write a chapter for a methodology book (2007) he was greatly amused, and said "wait until I tell my colleagues I am in a handbook on methodology." It was his character, this character, that preserved him and allowed him to flourish intellectually, as a servant of the world, and as a human being, during a time that was, for many people, a time of disillusion.

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