FAST CAPITALISM

An Interdisciplinary Journal

Volume 2 • Issue 1

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

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

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Bicycle Messengers and Fast Capitalism: An Old School Solution to the Needs of Techno-Capitalism

Kevin Wehr

The concept of accelerated capitalism, for most, implies an abstract theoretical proposition: under various names (fast capitalism, late capitalism, hyper capitalism, or post-Fordism) the turnover rate, the recouping of profits, technology adoption, and information exchange all proceed at an increased and increasing speed. While this phenomenon is well established in many parts of the world, developing nations and regions may exhibit uneven tendencies. What is not always recognized, however, is the uneven development within the so-called advanced economies. Social change is rarely a unilinear process, and technology within fast capitalism is no different. Bicycle messengers employ a decidedly nineteenth century technology to solve some of the most basic problems of capitalism: how to get bits of information from one location to another as fast as possible.

How do they do it? Why do they do it? By weaving in and out of street lanes, hopping curbs, using sidewalks, and passing the cars, cabs, and buses caught in the daily pulse of traffic, bike messengers use a small slice of the street to great effect. Carrying packages across town in the margins of the streets, though important to capitalism, nonetheless leaves bike messengers as a marginalized economic group. These riders, though they often desire to stand outside of mainstream capitalist society, end up reproducing the system: messengers support capitalism and representational government by delivering packages-for payment-faster than auto or truck delivery. When traffic gets bad in the city, especially when gridlock approaches, this marginal space becomes a niche for bicycle couriers. [1]

Why do they do it? To the casual observer, messengers may seem like lunatics on wheels. They are often represented in the media and the broader culture as the antihero of the urban jungle: the dirty, smelly recurring figures in movies and commercials that symbolize the dark underside and accelerated pace of the city. If messengers ride like lunatics they do so largely because they have to: Ironically enough, the structure of the delivery industry marginalizes the messengers with low pay, slight job security, and almost never any health insurance or other benefits.

Bicycle messengers are both marginal and liminal in many respects: they are liminal in the sense that they are somewhere in between cars and pedestrians; they are physically marginal in the space of the city; and they are further marginalized in and by the economic system. Yet this liminality and marginalization is what binds this unique community together: through rituals of working, racing, and partying messengers build and rebuild their community, in many cases taking pride in and attempting to defend their marginality (Kidder 2005).

The ubiquitous use of technology invented in the nineteenth century (the bicycle) to carry information that could otherwise be transferred in micromoments via the (increasingly wireless) information network seems counterintuitive. Yet as Jackson Lears (1981) has shown, ideas have experienced both progress and setbacks, while the adoption, diffusion, and rejection of technology have marked many of the transitions from one era to another. Antimodernism, Lears argued, reared its ugly head in the very moments of achieving what James Scott (1998) has called "high modernism." The civilization process, as Elias ([1939] 1982) has shown (and in interesting ways Foucault [1980] also intimates), contains moments of backsliding and chaotic counter movements. The fact that a guy on a bike can get something across the downtown core faster than any alternatives shows that some sectors of fast capitalism must still rely on decidedly "slow" technologies.

The Structure of Messenger Work in the Age of Technocapitalism

Labor, in the classic nineteenth-century analysis of capitalism, works on a wage rate under the supervision of the capitalist. The difference between the amount paid to the laborer and the amount of value produced by the laborer is the amount of profit realized. Marx argued that technology would be adopted if it helped reduce labor costs, improved turnover time, or otherwise conferred a special advantage to the producer. This process contributed to the tendency of the rate of profit to fall and thus to the eventual eruption of the crisis that is inherently embedded in the system (Marx [1867] 1967). The rapid adoption of new technology has characterized capitalism from the beginning, but in late capitalism, this pace has accelerated, perhaps beyond even Marx's prescient imaginings. The technology of the internet, where I google-up Wikipedia answers for vaguely phrased questions, the laptop that I write on, the email, cell phone, and fax communications with the editor, friends, the boss, family…all of these technologies that we accept into our lives so quickly and come to rely on so heavily have not managed to displace some fundamental needs. Handwritten signatures on original hard copy documents remain a legal requirement. Printed copies passed hand to hand are still the standard in many industries. Blueprints and graphic designs are often too large to be processed via information technology-and too precious to trust to the post. In order to handle these antitechnological remnants, the delivery industry remains vibrant.

Absent technological innovations, in some ways not much about capitalism has fundamentally changed in the late term-after all, labor power is still exploited for the profit of the owner and without the extension of the credit industry, crisis may have erupted much sooner. But not much has changed in the delivery business. Bike messengers are classic service industry workers: they pick up a package, transport it across town, and deliver it within a certain time frame. For this, clients pay a price. Some amount of this is paid to the delivery person with the rest going to overhead, advertising, and to support middle management and the profits of the company. Bike messengers are generally paid on a piece-rate system-either per package or by distance. Thus, the faster the courier rides, the more she is paid. Thus, classic incentive structures act to encourage the worker to perform her tasks as fast as possible. The company still enjoys the fruits of the cyclist's labor, and the structure of the occupation assists in the perpetuation of the capitalist system through the efficient transferring of information across town (Riley 2000; Cully 2001). As Lynn Breedlove (2002) put it in her semi-fictional account of messengering in San Francisco:

> **You take everything in, you don't miss nothing, the whole street and things coming at you from around corners as you round corners, and you can see things before they appear to the non-messenger eye, you can see through buildings, you can look down a cross street before you even get to it, half prophesy, half feel, half hear the way's clear. You have to if you want to survive and deliver the package on time.**

The organization of work in the short-distance delivery industry marginalizes couriers beyond the standard exploitative relationship of owner to worker. In typical fashion for a capitalist system, it is those who actually get the work done-those most crucial for the process-who undertake the greatest risk but receive the least reward. The pay is low, the danger is high, and job security and health care are nearly nonexistent. But couriers continue to ride, and ride as fast as they can. Since messengers are paid on a piece rate the more quickly they deliver each single piece (or "tag"), the more packages they can carry in a day, and the more cash they ride home with each week. This is encouraged and even required by the dispatchers, the delivery companies, and the clients themselves: if a tag is not delivered promptly, or if an especially quick delivery (a "rush" or a "hot shot") doesn't arrive across town in the promised time frame (sometimes ten minutes or less) then the courier may not be paid for her work at all.

Speedy package delivery is entirely the point of the industry. Messenger culture has plenty of splash, class, and panache, but the fundamental reason for being is to move materials from one place to another. Individual messengers are connected via radio or cell phone to a central dispatcher. Clients call in pickup/delivery requests to the dispatcher who writes up a tag and relays the information to a messenger, who writes down the info on a manifest sheet. The messenger goes to the pickup location, notes the time and place of pick up and the delivery address, and then proceeds to the delivery location, getting the manifest sheet signed at the drop-off point as proof of delivery. The messenger is paid for the number of deliveries each day (with rushes or long distance runs sometimes paid more, depending on the structure of the particular firm). Just like the typical cab driver, a messenger is thus dependent on the dispatcher for assigning the choice runs-much grumbling is heard about inequities perpetuated by dispatchers who sometimes favor a particular messenger (or gender, or race, or is biased against neophytes). One messenger eventually quit due to these aspects of the industry, saying "the number one thing that really made me start to hate

the job was sexual harassment and sexual discrimination."

The structure of this system guarantees that the faster a rider is, the more money she will get paid (assuming she is favored by the dispatcher!). This is why a premium is put on speed, agility, and creative approaches to beating the traffic. Dispatchers and managers tend to "look the other way" when it comes to such creativity, as it generally involves illegality. Messengers will run red lights and stop signs, weave in and out of lanes of traffic, use the sidewalk, median strips, and even ride into oncoming traffic or the wrong way down a one-way street in order to get a package to a client just a little bit faster. Such risky behavior is required by the structure of the system, and is tacitly encouraged by the dispatchers and clients. Again, according to Breedlove (2002):

> The question is not, is the light red, but can I make it across this intersection alive. You estimate the number of seconds it takes Car Driver's brain to register that his light is green, plus the second it takes him to put his foot on the gas and move into your lane, that's how much time you have to run the light.
>
> Now peds [pedestrians] are a different story, as they pose less of a threat to your physical safety, but they can slow you down and fuck you up with legal shit, so you want to miss hitting them. You keep stoking, weave here, cut there, thread the needle right through the middle of them. If you slow down, they just take over and you have to stop, and a messenger can't be stopping for a lowly ped. When that little green man lights up for peds to go, they go, and they don't care about nothing but going, not you, not cars, not nothing, they just march right at each other like ants. You got to speed up when your light turns red, and scream, because only a bike messenger yelling NO BRAKES and barreling at them at high speeds will stop them, see.

Though this risk is not necessarily highly remunerated, it is a point of pride for many messengers just as risk-taking behaviors are differently valued in many dangerous (and typically masculine) professions (Lyng 1990: Lois 2003).

The reputation as antihero is well earned. Messengers live a lifestyle well outside the mainstream. They are at once professionals who help to keep the wheels of capitalism greased, and are also individuals who resent "the system" and often talk of "ending the oiligarchy," through a revolution that, paraphrasing Gil Scott-Heron, "will not be motorized." Couriers are jokingly said to exist solely on beer, bong-hits, and pizza, and though this is clearly an exaggeration, during one discussion amongst messengers regarding how best to fuel the body for a long day's ride, many couriers suggested peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, protein bars, tofu, or a big steak. One courier responded:

> Don't forget beer! Readily available carbohydrates, fiber, protein, calcium, potassium, phosphorus and vitamins B, B2, and B6. No cholesterol or fat. Plus it's cheap and portable, for when you don't have time for lunch.

While the numerous nutritional claims made on behalf of beer may be disputed, this messenger certainly represents the stereotypical beer-swilling cycle courier.

Such conceptions-celebrated by some messengers, abhorred by others-are used to damn the entire community by many in the media and the larger society. National Public Radio's commentator Aaron Freeman [2] suggests that:

> Reckless, testosterone-engorged bike messengers are agents not merely of business communication but Satan. They frighten our pedestrians and annoy our drivers.

And a UK poll commissioned by Horlicks [3] (a brand of hot milk drinks, a subsidiary of GlaxoSmithKline) found that bicycle couriers are number 3 on a UK list of the least liked workers (below traffic wardens and bouncers, above telephone sales representatives and politicians).

Messengers see themselves as many things, including all of the stereotypes above. Perhaps the most common view is expressed by one messenger from Germany:

> In my opinion bike messengers neither are heroes, nor asphalt cowboys or whatever they are described as. This does not mean, that this job is no fun and it does not push your adrenalin, but in the first place it is a service and it is sport.

Messengers are labeled as hero, anti-hero, lunatic, and athlete. They are liminal characters that move in between labels and personify a shifting terrain of meaning.

Bicycle messengers are neither drivers nor pedestrians-the two main groups considered by officials in designing streets and passing traffic laws. Instead, cyclists are liminal-they are somewhere in between. Though they can often deliver a package faster than an auto, there are clear advantages of speed, acceleration, and weight in a car. Yet cyclists have the same advantages over pedestrians. This is the uneasy unity that messengers represent on so many levels: "This coincidence of opposite processes and notions in a single representation characterizes the particular unity of

the liminal: that which is neither this nor that, and yet is both" (Turner 1967:99).

According to Turner (1967), the characteristics of liminal groups extend to ideas of tolerance and an emphasis on nonstructure. As Turner points out, they are often a "community or comity of comrades and not a structure of hierarchically arrayed positions. This comradeship transcends distinctions of rank, age, kinship position, and, in some kinds of cultic groups, even sex" (1967:100). Bicycle messengers often take pride at the tolerance and antistructure that their community possesses. Those who are attracted to messengering as a profession generally express as an ideal the non-hierarchical organization (such as alleycats, described below), and sometimes bristle at the direct orders that come from the more authoritarian dispatchers, police on the street, and sometimes even from one another.

Messengers also blur the boundaries between work and play, similar to Turner's (1982) discussion of the seriousness of human play (pp. 30-39). The bike is, in western cultures, a symbol of youthful playfulness. It is not something that grown men and women use for work-except perhaps as an athletic tool in sport cycling. But bicycle messengers take the child's toy and apply it-well modified-to gainful employment.

While Turner's ideas on liminality are primarily regarding a temporally-based cultural transition-from boyhood to manhood, from religious novice to the initiated-it is very much a spatially-defined period. As with the Australian aborigine on walkabout, the liminal subject must often physically ostracize themselves, survive, and return to the spatial confines and comforts of the tribe. The overlap between spatial and temporal transitions, boundaries, and processes is a well-defined area of study by many geographers, foremost, perhaps, is David Harvey. The bicycle messenger, as a liminal subject, is simultaneously a temporal and spatial one-a marginal being as well as a liminal one, effected by political, economic, cultural, and historical factors (Gilbert and Wehr 2003). The many structural forces combine through contingent and sequential circumstances to define the landscape of the city. Cityspace, what the bicycle messenger navigates daily, has been built layer-by-layer in space, and moment-by-moment over time.

Professionalism, Risk, and Gettin' Paid

Though messengers are often assumed to be employees of a delivery company, this status is actually quite unstable. Most messengers are categorized as "Independent Contractors" (ICs) who are paid per delivery with no fixed contract. They can show up for work one day and skip the next (though this behavior generally earns a bad reputation). Couriers often can work their own schedule: half a day or the full day, this week or that week, taking a delivery offered by the dispatcher or not. They generally have to provide their own bike, their own bag, their own helmet (or not, as is often the case), and sometimes their own insurance and bonding. This set up, while having significant disadvantages to the couriers, is accepted and even embraced by many couriers due to the value of having no fixed hours: This allows the hard-drinking lifestyle that many couriers indulge in. Other couriers decry IC status as akin to indentured labor: because of this status there is no job security, no health care or other benefits, and no protection provided to other delivery professionals, such as bonding and insurance and perceived professionalism. As one courier put it:

> well, I was told at this one building that I had to leave my bag. in a wooden box. on the dock. which was open, so basically they were telling me I had to leave my bag. unattended. in the alley. fedex, ups, any old yahoo walking-in in a suit could be carrying any manner of package or luggage and they don't get so much as a second glance.

Because of the perception of messengers as unprofessional or worse-a perception that is produced and reproduced through IC status-the messenger is forced to the economic margins of a capitalist system.

But who is forcing whom? While IC status relieves messengers or many of the protections that other workers enjoy, the freedom and marginality is also clearly relished by many riders. Life in the margin of the streets is dangerous, and many messengers see themselves as opposed to several different enemies: commuters, cops, cabs, and busses. Pedestrians (as above) are simply obstacles. But other professionals of the street may exhibit outright malice towards bike messengers. How some riders deal with this is less than professional-one's life is, after all, potentially at stake. One messenger expressed typical outrage at how drivers might harass him, suggesting that an appropriate response would be to swing the steel U-shaped lock that most messengers carry in their back pockets for easy access:

> I don't recall askin' for the cops to fuck with me or anybody else but that's the way things are and as long as I have to use my ulock or some language that may offend to get yours or anybody else's attention who is endangering my life then that's what I'll do. do I want or like havin' to yell to avoid being hit every day? no but I do not want to die.

Others chafe at such suggestions, asking instead that riders be more professional and clear-headed in their interactions with others on the street:

> Spitting in someone's face or taking off their rear view with your lock feels REALLY good the split second you do it but keep in mind, the next time this motorist has a incident with a cyclist/messenger, they will remember "the last time" and said cyclist may not be fortunate enough to get away from his/her assailant. Most cities with a messenger community want people to look at them as professionals. When people witness lock-swinging or spitting etc. it only reenforces the negative stereotype of the Bicycle Messenger. Do yourself and others a favor and don't give Joe Public any more fuel for their already twisted idea of what Bicycle Messengers are about.

There is a dynamic interaction at play between independence and professionalism, with a clear understanding of image portrayal: some messengers see their work as a day-to-day brush with death while others see it as a chance to cultivate an image. Still others note that the whole point is not to swing a lock or get in someone's face, but instead:

> being a messenger is not about dodging things, or swearing at cops or people who are in your way, it's about being invisible, so you don't HAVE to dodge and swear, you're not the only one that's in a rush.

There is an interesting logic of control at work here. As Braverman (1974) argued, management requires that workers give up control of the workplace and the work process (p. 58). But IC status both gives messengers flexibility while also forcing them to relinquish a certain amount of control. Messengers cannot be micromanaged as assembly-line workers may be. When your office is the street, and your job involves bending the vehicle code, independence is important. Similar to Knights and Willmott's (1989) argument against dualism in classical labor process theory, the work of bike messengers shows that management versus labor, control versus freedom, and professionalism versus independence are false dichotomies.

But unlike many groups forced to compete for scarce resources at the economic margins, messengers are not fierce individualists. Though their work is often done alone in traffic and their economic and spatial marginalization contributes to individualistic orientations, couriers also organize together to address the negative aspects of the industry. Bicycle Messenger Associations (BMAs) have been organized in most major U.S. cities, along with national BMAs and an International Bicycle Messenger Association. Several cities have successfully established labor unions, and affiliation drives are underway in several more locations. These associations act together with or in the place of a labor union to address the typical labor concerns of hours, wages, and working conditions. The BMAs and unions have also taken on the media's inaccurate portrayal of messengers by writing letters to local papers and have engaged in politics on behalf of messenger issues by similarly writing to administrators complaining about unsafe conditions. One example followed the recent death of Sebastian Lukomski in London on 23 February 2004. Seb was the seventh documented messenger to be run over by a Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV), a type of truck that weighs more than 7.5 metric tons. Bill Chidley, the Chair of the London BMA wrote to the Mayor of London and the various political parties with representation in the City. While the city officials and party representatives have taken the LBMA seriously, little actual change has taken place [4].

Lack of health care is a particularly important issue for many messengers (primarily in the United States as Canadian and many European messengers have a nationalized health care system to rely on). Due to IC status, any accident that happens "on the job" actually has few repercussions for the delivery company in terms of worker's compensation claims. Many messengers avoid any such claims (whether due to ignorance or IC status), and instead get heath care where they can (which usually means either a county hospital or none at all). One innovative solution to this is the Bicycle Messenger Emergency Fund (BMEF), which was started by an enterprising and civic-minded former messenger. In the traditional mould of the nineteenth-century benevolent association, the BMEF raises funds from informal charity races and individual messenger donations and distributes the funds to injured uninsured couriers.

Such community endeavors show the commitment of messengers to their colleagues. Cooperation in the face of adversity is certainly nothing new, but given the effects of a broader culture that teaches fierce individualism and within a structure that encourages competition, it is amazing to see the camaraderie and good will on the streets. As one messenger glowingly recalled:

> When I first became a messenger I was inspired by the spirit and generosity of messengers. My first day on the job, I got a flat. I didn't have a patch kit or pump and at least 3 messengers stopped to offer help to fix it. It was a completely different world. Strange couriers waved hello, and some offered advice and some concern. It didn't make sense in today's world. Most

> people seemed to actually care about each other. I felt like I was part of something that could teach the rest of the world a few lessons.

How is such community maintained, reproduced, and transformed?

Alleycat Races / Community Matters

There is a high degree of overlap between bike messengers and the punk rock community. Many messenger events are marked with a punk music show, and many of the distinctive stylistic markers are shared between the two groups. Both groups also share some overlap in the political stance of anarchic tendencies. Why this affinity? Messengering offers an outside job: free from the offices, they are free to have their own style and to be as different and strange as they want to be. Messengers can be society's doppelganger or auslander: the "other" wandering the streets, both seen and unseen, in and out of the system, flying at lethal speeds, thriving on danger and loving the rush but hating the war of internal combustion engines versus human-powered vehicles. Its "do it yourself" [DIY]: simple and outside the system.

Yet just like punk rock, it is inside the system to some extent: punk uses the same three chords as any pop song-though faster and noisier and with amplifier feedback and screaming lyrics. And it is also beyond the system, a community on its own that takes care of its own, a place where you can be what you are and not be judged for it. It is a place where bigotry, homophobia, sexism are both challenged, subverted, and perhaps almost as often, reproduced. Punk rock and bicycle messengering have an affinity because they are both communities at the margin of the system. As one messenger put it:

> This is the only non co-opted, dynamic, vibrant punk rock subculture left. They tried to co-opt it but we fuckin' resisted.

While this resistance is clear and strong, it is not necessarily unidirectional or monolithic. Messenger style-the fixed gear bicycle, the bag, the clothing, the outlaw attitude and the aggressive riding style has been much copied, which could be argued is a form of cooptation. In fact, at messenger races there is a new entry category created just for these copycat riders, half-messenger and half-poseur, these folks are sometimes called "posenger." But while some messengers strongly resist any form of selling out, others have actively pursued cooptation. The 2005 Cycle Messenger World Championships (CMWC) was sponsored in part by the athletic gear manufacturer Puma, who also sponsors a team of messenger-racers. They get clothes, bikes, and travel money from race to race. While some view this as clearly selling out, others see it in the starkest of terms:

> Everyone else is getting' paid. Why shouldn't we get paid too? [One Puma racer] has a family to support, no health care, no pension. Why shouldn't he get paid?

Sponsorship, free merchandise, and getting paid are all stops in the vast grey area between the judgments of "authentic" and "sell out." But what marks this community much more than the debates over whether a major clothing manufacturer should sponsor a team of messengers in order to give the corporate brand "street" credibility is the emphasis on how much community matters and is celebrated. In December of 2002, I attended the North American Cycle Courier Championships (NACCC) in Houston, Texas. Such a race is a massive undertaking: where a local event may draw up to 30 riders, the championship races often draw hundreds or even thousands riders. This is a three-day party, with lots of beer, lots of riding, and lots of live music-generally punk rock. One courier told me that in the Cycle Messenger World Championships (CMWC) and the NACCC "the final C should really stand for celebration." In fact, there are only modest rules governing the race, one of which in the NACCC is that riders must be "at least mildly sober."

Racing, of course, is not just about winning meager pots of cash at the end. In fact, most races offer the winner only bragging rights. But they do offer the space for community celebration. They are moments of Durkheimian collective effervescence where competition, adrenaline, camaraderie, and controlled substances mix freely.

An "alleycat" race is the other end of the spectrum from the CMWC and regional championships like the North American Cycle Courier Championship (NACCC). They are loosely organized, relatively informal, not sponsored, and illegal. I participated in many in my days as a messenger, but one in the northern Midwest was particularly memorable. It was a cold and wet February morning and we had to drive an hour to where the race was being

held. We rolled into the messenger shop at 7:30 for the 8 A.M. race. The shop is really not much more than an old warehouse with a cracked cement floor and beer cans and cigarette butts covering all available surfaces: tables, chairs, window ledges, and the floor. A few lockers lean precariously against one wall and there is an office in a corner with a disheveled desk, two phones, and an outdated computer. There is a vile-looking and worse smelling bathroom containing more beer cans that toilet supplies. But mostly there are bikes and bike racks everywhere. Chaos rules: there is no rhyme or reason. The bikes are jammed into the racks that are jammed into the shop that is shoehorned between buildings at the end of an alley. But it is downtown and the rent is cheap. Such is the office of a local courier company that is putting on the alleycat race. We signed in and joined the crowd comparing bikes and swapping stories while several messengers had a foamy breakfast of Miller Genuine Draft.

A crowd formed around the tricksters as they showed off in the alley outside. They did their stuff-having fun and warming up. One guy performed no-handed skids on his fixed-gear track bike. [5] Another rode his track bike backwards in easy figure eights. Another stood up on the top tube of his bicycle, surfing the parking lot on his trusty steed. Then we mobilized for the start line a couple miles away in the industrial section south of the city, right on the water.

An alleycat is not usually called a race because it is an illegal, underground venture. Calling it a race implies sponsors, insurance, and prizes-none of which are generally involved. Modest entry fees are collected, pooled, and given to the high finishers-the money usually ends up buying beer for all the participants at the end of the race. The race itself can take many different forms, but all mimic the trials of a messenger's workday. The most basic is a list of delivery addresses made up by the organizers, which the riders must visit (sometimes in a specific order, other times not). In other races the rider may have to perform a feat (doing push ups or hopping over barricades while carrying the bicycle are popular). The winner is the first rider to complete all of the tasks and visit all of the addresses. The race offers a time and place for messengers to gather together and recreate their community, as well as an opportunity for good-natured competition. In the continental championships (Europe and North America) and in the Cycle Messenger World Championships (CMWC) the victor wins very little more than a new messenger bag and bragging rights for the next year, but these are formal, sponsored events. At an alleycat you also may win bragging rights, but the course is on the city street and you must deal with live traffic, and so is a more test of a messenger's ability.

Alleycat races are a place where messengers can congregate and reaffirm their status as members of a community who have similarities, differences, but one thing in common: cycling in the city. Some may drink, smoke, and ride like lunatics. Others are straightedge professionals in training for spring races. Still others are simply trying to make ends meet. Alleycat races are a place to produce and reproduce their solidarity with one another, as well as their antipathy towards autos. With 20 or 30 cyclists on the road, cars lose their advantage. In a group that large, cyclists can dominate the road and take back the pavement.

After a map was passed around with the delivery locations listed on it, an organizer at the head of the group of 20 cyclists dropped a U-lock to simulate a starting gun, and we were off. We grabbed our bikes from where they were leaning against a fence, and the first guy to his bike managed to knock everyone else's down (on purpose?). He sprang into first place while we extricated our bikes from the ensuring melee and tried to chase him down. The track riders are almost always the fastest, and sure enough after a four block all-out sprint I found myself with two fixie riders trailing the first place rider ahead of us by a block. Since I had no knowledge of the city, I introduced myself to the two racers next to me. One was from a city farther north, and the other was, happily, a local. I suggested that we could compete against one another and all lose, or we could work together and try to catch the leader. The local could tell us where to go, and all three of us would cooperate on pulling[6] .

We worked together but the other rider was almost immediately out of sight. He took a left where we took a right and we did the deliveries in a different order. At each stop we would see other racers doing the drops and moving on, all of them choosing their own routes through the city. We crossed cobblestone streets that, when wet, made turns impossible, and riding in a straight line difficult. The city is built at the meeting place of two rivers, and the racecourse crossed multiple metal bridges known affectionately amongst the local messengers as "cheese graters." They get extremely slick when wet, and if you go down on them, they'll gouge at you like a massive cheese grater.

After riding through 12 deliveries in about 45 minutes and covering 20 miles worth of city streets, we finally came to the last address, listed on my manifest sheet simply as "the garage." Not knowing anything about it, I followed our local and around a wet turn he suddenly took off in an all-out sprint. Our companion had tired long ago and it was down to the local and me. He raced, I raced, and we came down the street next to each other at breakneck speeds-easily 30 miles per hour. All of my focus was on the sprint: making sure not to hit the rider six inches to my left, avoiding a slick manhole cover, jumping around an opening car door, when all of a sudden I caught the sign's

image in the corner of my eye: blue neon advertised a local bar called The Garage. I was between the other rider and the curb when my companion headed toward a driveway near the bar's entryway-I did the same, half to avoid him and half to beat him to the finish. We both went into a skid but he stopped more quickly than I and we both went down, grinding to a halt on the sidewalk in a jumbled mess. Jumping up, we presented our manifest sheets to the race official at the same moment and were proclaimed a tie…for second place. The other local who took off a block in front of us at the start of the race had beaten us by about a minute.

Not all alleycats are like this, but all are serious on some level. One alleycat is famed for its serious attempt at a lack of seriousness. It is held in late January in Minneapolis, Minnesota. It can be as much as 30 degrees below zero, with plenty of snow and ice, and as if this weren't enough, each delivery requires you to drink alcohol. Since it is always run on the same day as the famous football game, they call it The Stuporbowl.

Both punk rock and messenger communities strive to be places were bigotry, homophobia, and sexism are not tolerated, are challenged outright, and sometimes subverted. This is not to say that sexism, homophobia, and bigotry do not exist. There are few black couriers and few women. One ten-year veteran, a woman who many look up to for her hard work, leadership, and skill, recently quit as a courier. Her reasons were her own, but she had this to say, as quoted above:

> After about my 6th or 7th year the things that bugged me the job were starting to crowd out the things that I loved about it. The number one thing that really made me start to hate the job was sexual harassment and sexual discrimination.

This particular courier has won many races, sometimes taking both the first female category as well as the first overall. Though there are strong and skillful female couriers and there are woman-owned courier companies, gender bias has been a constant struggle in this testosterone-charged community. Race organizers now strive to give equal prizes to male and female categories, but this was not always true. Overall, the profession (if you can call it such a formal endeavor) is one filled with young white men.

That messengers are predominantly white and male this does not, ipso facto, make it sexist. But there are such elements. For example, though many couriers make it a point to be inclusive in language and action, labels are not always politically correct. For example, many couriers ride track bikes, as described above. They are both honored by those who admire the skill needed to ride one, and vilified by those who believe that riding a bike without brakes at breakneck speeds in live traffic is just plain dumb. A compromise position, to ride a fixed gear bicycle with brakes mounted in case of emergency seems to get no respect from either side; such riders are branded a "bitch" or a "pussy." Just as with the larger society, efforts to break away from sexist language and customs founders on the rocks of hierarchy, power, and inertia. At base, punk rock and bicycle messengering have an affinity because they are both communities at the margin of the system, but both reflect significant aspects of the system that they rebel against.

One group that showed up to the NACCC takes the identity of bike punks to the extreme: they throw full cans beer at each one another, at nearby couriers, and even at racers on the course. These are athletes who smoke, drink, and do drugs while dressed in clothes reminiscent of the Hell's Angels. Body piercings and tattoos abound. At one point they tossed their bikes into the bicycle version of a mosh pit, [7]spray-painting them and lighting them on fire. Laughing at the whole idea of the race, one courier yelled: "Budweiser is my sports drink of choice!" After an abysmal showing in the qualifying race, another said "maybe we should go into rehab so we can win some races."

The community of messengers, though filled with antagonistic individuals, professionals, anarchists, activists, and many other cyclists who are unable to be categorized, remains a community. As one messenger said, "we are part of the most amazing profession with such creative, alive people who work so hard for each other and their community." I can think of no better example of this than a group of Buddhist messengers in Japan who held a Critical Mass where they rode to a Shinto shrine and prayed for the safety of messengers around the world.

Conclusion: Old School Solutions to New School Capitalism

What enables a bike messenger to do his job so quickly is not just muscles and gears and creative (illegal) approaches to traffic; he also needs a radio or cell phone, a decidedly twenty-first century technology. How can nineteenth century technology co-exist with the latest wireless communications in a seamless version of fast capitalism? Processes of social change are clouded and crosscut with contingency, and history is a process of both continuity and change. As it is with bike messengers in the dawn of the twenty-first century, so it was with

modernist and antimodernist tendencies 100 years ago. Jackson Lears characterizes antimodernism as a search for medieval alternatives. It is "a longing for a regeneration at once physical, moral, and spiritual" (1981:xii). As such, antimodernism is partially backwards looking. Yet Lears also identifies Theodore Roosevelt's "cult of the strenuous life" as a manifestation of antimodernism. How can the famously "progressive" president be both progressive and antimodern (1981:xii)? The answer, for Lears, is that the "antimodern sentiment was unstable, ambivalent" (1981:xii). It represents the yearnings for that which is lost in the march of rationalization and demystification. Antimodernism is, in part, the carryover from times past, the continuity in history's dialectic of change.

And so it is with bike messengers. In part due to the quirky traditional legal requirement of an original signature, and in part due to the geographic concentration of office space in the downtown core and the concomitant traffic, we see that sometimes the solution to the needs of accelerated capitalism is, in fact, nineteenth-century technology: a guy on a bike can get the package across town and into a client's hands faster, cheaper, and more reliably than anything else.

Endnotes

1. The bulk of the data presented in this paper comes from a four year participant observation research program in which the author worked as a bicycle messenger and joined in the many different activities related to this business and the adjoining culture: messenger races, national, regional, and global gatherings, critical mass demonstrations, and the daily grind of delivering parcels by bicycle to destinations all over the city. The messenger's voices that give weight to this study come from over 100 individual interviews and group conversations at gatherings of all sorts (races, parties, formal and informal rides), from an international electronic discussion list, from several book-length published accounts of messengering, and from other published sources such as newspapers and other periodicals. All grammatical errors, slang, obscenities, and other colorful material from the interviews have been left as-is for this paper.

2. National Public Radio's All Things Considered, 3 May 2004 "Commentary: Bicycle Thieves' Essential Role" (http://www.npr.org/features/feature.php?wfId=1869196)

3. Reported by Borkowski Press Centre: http://www.borkowski.co.uk/archives/press/2004_01.html. The poll was conducted "amongst a representative sample of 2,086 adults aged 16+."

3. See http://www.londonmessengers.org/hgv.html

4. A track bike, also known as a fixed-gear bike, or a "fixie," is a bicycle stripped down to its most basic and historic elements. The bike has a single gear with no freewheel (hence the name), without a rear gear cluster, no front or rear derailleur, and often no brakes. The front and rear chain rings are connected via a highly tensioned chain, thus, when pedaled forward the bike will go forward, if pedaled backwards, the bike will go backwards. Those who ride without benefit of brakes simply apply reverse pressure on the pedals to slow down, or stand on the pedals to halt the rear wheel completely and skid to a stop. The reasons for riding such a contraption are myriad, and one is certainly style. But the bikes are also very light and thus very fast. Because the rider cannot coast, he or she is continually either accelerating or decelerating, so there is a continual dynamic balance between the bike and the road-hence there is more control. This type of bicycle was developed for racing in a velodrome, a special bicycle-racing track, hence the name "track bike."

5. Pulling is a term for what the lead rider of a pace line does. The rider in the front of the line "pulls" the others by cutting any headwind, letting those in the rear rest. The spinning wheel also creates a draft effect that, when the riders are six inches or closer, gives an additional pull. It is commonly thought that such drafting techniques will save the rear riders perhaps 30% of their energy. Riders take turns in the front of the pace line.

6. A "mosh pit," or simply "a pit," is the term for an anarchic place on the dance floor at a punk rock concert where participants throw each other around, pushing, pulling, and hitting one another. (The term probably comes from the word mash, as in to mash potatoes. One, possibly apocryphal, story is that the ability to control someone by pulling their hair impelled punks to shave their heads, thus the popular skinhead look.) Slamming into one another in a mosh pit (hence the label "slam dancing") may appear to an uninitiated observer as violent and chaotic. In fact, there are complex rules of behavior, both self-organized and self-enforced. Participants may indeed behave violently but rarely do people brutalize each other on purpose. In fact, one important rule is that if someone falls, others pick them up to keep them from being trampled.

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The Art of the Accident: Paul Virilio and Accelerated Modernity

Steve Redhead

One urgent part of a reconstructed theoretical social and human sciences project in the twenty-first century is to conceptualize anew the 'socio-technologies of connection, resilience, mobility and collapse in contemporary cities' [1] especially in the wake of 9/11, 2001, and 7/7, 2005, all that has followed those events (Ali 2005; Armitage 2005; Conley 2005; Kureishi 2005; Thrift 2005; Virilio 2005a; Virilio 2005b; Virilio 2005c; Virilio 2005d). In this essay we consider critically one example of a theory of the 'accident' - the network failure or collapse or catastrophe or breakdown in what we term here accelerated modernity. That theory is provided by the French urban and cultural theorist Paul Virilio. Virilio's theory of the accident is relatively little known and even less discussed. He is also a figure whose oeuvre has been generally imported into the English speaking academic world as essentially another, albeit quirky, complementary element in contemporary social theory following on from other French theorists such as Jean Baudrillard, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault, when in fact Virilio has accurately characterized himself over the years as explicitly against sociology and, moreover, for, as he has put it, war and politics (Der Derian 1998; Armitage 2000; Redhead 2004a; Redhead 2004b). Moreover, Virilio's consistent influences over the years have been photography, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, Gestalt psychology, stained glass painting and anarchistic Christianity [2], a very different intellectual background to the 'poststructuralists' and 'postmodernists' with whom he is often misleadingly bracketed. Alan Sokal and Jean Bricmont (2003), in their ill-conceived 'expose' of the supposed scientific inadequacies of 'French postmodernism' and 'postructuralism', subject Paul Virilio to withering attack (the Virilio chapter is Chapter 10 in the second English edition) alongside Jacques Lacan, Julia Kristeva, Bruno Latour, and Felix Guattari amongst many others. Unfortunately for Sokal and Bricmont's project, Paul Virilio has little in common with such figures other than nationality or Parisian residence. Indeed, as we shall see in this essay, Virilio has gone further with this self-labeling process and described his own distinct intellectual enterprise as that of a critic of the art of technology (Redhead 2004a). His theory of the accident, then, not surprisingly involves what we call here an aesthetics of the accident. Virilio however, in providing a perspective on the art of the accident in our increasingly accelerated and dangerous modernities, falls short of what is required in the contemporary urban sociological project. What is required, more generally, is in fact a reinvigorated sociology, not merely an art, of the accident.

The Art of the Accident or the Accident of Art

Paul Virili [3], French theorist of 'urbanisme' extraordinaire and so-called high priest of speed, has been dropping logic bombs on us for over thirty-five years. In these highly idiosyncratic tales of accelerated culture, or what we have elsewhere called accelerated modernity the speed of mass communications as well as the speed of 'things' is what counts (Redhead 2004b). In this scenario we have all, to some extent or other, become historians of Virilio's instant present where immediacy, instantaneity and ubiquity rule. But this is not the whole story of either Paul Virilio or accelerated modernity.

Paul Virilio is now in his eighth decade. He was born in France in 1932 of an Italian father and French Catholic mother. He has retired from his only academic position as Professor of Architecture at the Ecole Speciale d'Architecture in Paris, France, a post he had held since the late 1960s, after being elected by the students in the wake of the events of 'May 68'. On retirement he was nominated Emeritus Professor. Armed with his senior citizen card he moved from Paris to La Rochelle on the Atlantic coast of France, a considerable upheaval for someone like Virilio who suffers from claustrophobia and rarely travels. He retired, he said at the time, to write a book on, in his own words, 'the accident', a project he had in mind for over ten years. His haphazard progress towards the academy through the 1950s and 1960s was unusual, to say the least, and included a period where he spent his time obsessively photographing hundreds of the German bunkers on the North Atlantic coast of France which date from the Second World War, a conflict which had scarred him as a young man, and a spell where he trained as a stained glass painter working eventually with Braque and Matisse. His ultimate claim to international fame is that he has over many years developed a theory of speed, technology and modernity which, whatever its flaws, is worth taking seriously, even if it is ultimately jettisoned by its once enthusiastic users. This theorizing of speed and modernity alone marks him out as a major contemporary thinker. As a mark of his growing influence in the theoretical development of human and social sciences throughout the globe in the twenty-first century the Virilian idea of the 'dromocratic condition' [4] displacing the notion of 'postmodern condition', has become increasingly popular amongst cultural theorists in the international academy. His idea of the 'function of the oblique', a utopian radical theory of architectural space developed with French architect Claude Parent in the 1960s, has also started to receive the attention it now deserves in the overall assessment of Virilio's life and work (Armitage 2000; Redhead 2004a; Redhead, 2004b). But it is his little known and barely discussed theory of the accident which should interest those involved in the urgent discussions around urban vulnerability and network failure in the twenty-first century. The idea of a global 'dromocratic condition' comes, in fact, from Virilio's short-lived career as a self-styled 'dromologist' in a few short but quite well-known writings in the 1970s (Redhead 2004a; Redhead 2004b). The 'society of speed' that this work analyzed, was never actually part of a fully formed conceptual apparatus and Virilio soon moved on to other topics and ideas in the maelstrom of the neoliberal 1980s. The idea of the theory of the accident on the other hand, though full of problems, is a more sustained part of his recent oeuvre and has been in genesis since at least the early 1990s as Virilio has continued to accelerate his output of rapid, short books and distinctive, idiosyncratic interviews (Virilio and Petit 1999; see, for instance, the collection of interviews in Armitage, 2001; and also Virilio and Lotringer 2002; Virilio and Lotringer 2005).

There are conflicting interpretations of Virilio's theorizing in the parts of the academic world which have bothered to consider his work but essentially Virilio's contention is that the speeding up of technologies, especially communications technologies like the internet and e-mail, have tended to abolish time and distance. Speed, for Virilio, has had a largely military gestation. The way in which mass communication has speeded up at the same time has meant, in his view that old-fashioned industrial war has given way to the information bomb (an idea which he takes from Albert Einstein, another major lifelong influence on Virilio) or information war. As military conflict has increasingly become 'war at the speed of light' (see Redhead 2004a for a characterization of all of Virilio's work as theory at the speed of light) - as he labeled the first Gulf War in the early-1990s - the tyranny of distance in civilian as well as military life has almost disappeared. This does not mean that there is no deceleration, or slowness, though. Inertia, or better still what Virilio termed 'polar inertia', has set in for even the supersonic airplane traveler or high-speed train devotee.

As we have already noted, Paul Virilio eventually left his post in academia to write a long-planned book on what he has called the accident, a concept which has over the last decade become more prevalent in his thinking and published work. Crucially, though, the same phenomena of speed and war are different today in Virilio's view than they were when he first started writing about them in any sustained manner in the 1970s and 1980s. He has contemplated this change in a virtual conversation with interviewer Carlos Oliveira in the mid-1990s where he related the issue of the contemporary situation to the general arguments he had been making for a decade or more about the consequences of what he has variously termed 'accelerated temporality' and the 'acceleration of our daily lives':

> This is because we are witnessing a radical break; it is not my thinking that has become radical, the situation itself has radicalized beyond measure. The end of the bloc-oriented confrontation between East and West, the transition from the industrial to the INFORMATIONAL mode of production, the globalization that is being achieved through the telecommunication networks and the information (super)highways - all these developments raise grave questions." (Virilio and Oliveira 1996)

For Virilio the 'grave questions' are increasingly explored through the notion of the accident in his writings during the 1990s and into the twenty-first century. The term accident though, in Virilio's use and specialized terminology, is a complicated and ambiguous notion. Here, as frequently happens elsewhere in Virilio's original French language writing and speaking, the English translation oversimplifies by connoting merely a catastrophic event rather than the deeper philosophical reference to accident and substance and the phenomenological and existentialist debates Virilio inherited from those he listened to (the likes of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Vladimir Jankelevitch and Jean Wahl) as a student at the university of the Sorbonne in Paris in the early 1960s. Virilio (Virilio and Petit 1999), for his part, has emphasised that:

> For the philosopher substance is absolute and necessary, whereas the accident is relative and contingent. So the accident is what happens unexpectedly to the substance, the product or the recently invented technical object. It is, for example, the original accident of the Challenger space shuttle ten years ago. It is the duty of scientists and technicians to avoid the accident at all costs...In fact, if no substance can exist in the absence of an accident, then no technical object can be developed without in turn generating "its" specific accident: ship=ship wreck, train=train wreck, plane=plane crash. The accident is thus the hidden face of technical progress...one thing that must be considered here is the preponderance and role of the speed of the accident, thus the limitation of speed and the penalties for "exceeding the speed limit". With the acceleration following the transportation revolution of the last century, the number of accidents suddenly multiplied and sophisticated procedures had to be invented in order to control air, rail and highway traffic. With the current world-wide revolution in communication and telematics, acceleration has reached its physical limit, the speed of electromagnetic waves. So there is a risk not of a local accident in a particular location, but rather of a global accident that would affect if not the entire planet, then at least the majority of people concerned by these technologies...It is apparent that this new notion of the accident has nothing to do with the Apocalypse, but rather with the imperious necessity to anticipate in a rational way this kind of catastrophe by which the interactivity of telecommunications would reproduce the devastating effects of a poorly managed radioactivity - think about Chernobyl. (Pp. 92-3)

The nature of the accident, according to Virilio (Virilio and Oliveira 1996), has changed, and changed speed and everything else in its wake:

> The information revolution which we are currently witnessing ushers in the era of the global accident. The old kind of accidents were localized in space and time: a train derailment took place, say, in Paris or in Berlin; and when a plane crashed, it did so in London or wherever in the world. The catastrophes of earlier time were situated in real space, but now, with the advent of absolute speed of light and electromagnetic waves, the possibility of a global accident has arisen, of an accident that would occur simultaneously to the world as a whole.

Despite the fact that the information revolution has not had a great deal of effect on Virilio himself - he uses the internet only rarely, he has at times almost given up watching television - he has said that he does regard cyberspace as a new form of perspective. Our world is a 'cybermonde' according to Paul Virilio. Especially through cyberspace, for Virilio, history has hit the wall of worldwide time where with live transmission, local time no longer creates history, where, in his view, real time conquers real space, producing what he calls a time accident, which he sees as an accident with no equal. According to Virilio (Virilio and Oliveira 1996), speeding up has meant reaching the limit of speed, that of real time:

> A possible symptom of this globalization, of the eventuality of such an accident, was the stock exchange crash of 1987. We will no longer live in local time as we did in the past when we were prisoners of history. We will live in world time, in global time. We are experiencing an epoch that spells the international, the global accident. This is the way I interpret simultaneity and its imposition upon us, as well as the immediacy and the ubiquity, that is, the omnipresence of the information bomb, which at the moment, thanks to the information (super)highways and all the technological breakthroughs and developments in the field of telecommunication, is just about to explode.

The Accident of September 11

The 9/11 event has been cited by Virilio as an example of his theory of the 'accident of accidents', a generalized accident occurring everywhere at the same time, live on global television and the internet. He admitted to Sylvere Lotringer shortly after the attacks on New York and Washington that 'the door is open' with what he called 'the great attack' and furthermore that he saw New York as 'what Sarajevo was' when 'Sarajevo triggered the First World War' (Virilio and Lotringer 2002). On September 11, 2001, Virilio's earlier prophecy in his work of the 1990s about

a generalized accident or total accident seemingly came tragically true as a small, tightly knit group of men, armed only with Stanley knives, were seen to have taken over the cockpits of the hijacked planes and flew jet airliners with masses of fuel into the highly populated buildings of the World Trade Center with the loss of nearly 3,000 lives and the destruction of several buildings (including the twin towers) in the heart of the financial center of American (and arguably world) capitalism. The beginning of this post-Cold War age of imbalance as Virilio has called it, was as he said at the time of the first, 1993 attack on the twin towers (after which, bizarrely, he was called on as a consultant) seen in a new form of warfare - the accident of accidents, or the 'Great Accident'. The 1993 attack was precipitous for Virilio (2000):

> In the manner of a massive aerial bombardment, this single bomb, made of several hundred kilos of explosives placed at the building's very foundations, could have caused the collapse of a tower four hundred metres high. So it is not a simple remake of the film Towering Inferno, as the age-conscious media like to keep saying, but much more of a strategic event confirming for us all The Change In The Military Order Of This Fin-De-Siecle. As the bombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, in their day, signaled a new era for war, the explosive van in New York illustrates the mutation of terrorism. (P. 18)

Virilio (2000) noted at the time of the 1993 World Trade Center attack by another small group of terrorists that the perpetrators of such acts 'are determined not merely to settle the argument with guns' but will 'try to devastate the major cities of the world marketplace.' Within eight years a slightly larger group of Islamic fundamentalist terrorists had indeed apparently done so (Ruthen 2002). Many of the features of what Virilio (2000) sets out in a contemporaneous essay on the 1993 World Trade Center attack being on the cards for the future of humanity, were to be put into practice with exactly the predicted effect of the devastation of a world city on September 11, 2001. In fact, ironically, 'Towering Inferno' images probably were rife in the minds of many of the watchers of the 9/11 'accident'. In Virilio's (2002) own book length musings after September 2001, implicitly about the 9/11 attack, entitled [5] Ground Zero, he has explicitly claimed that as the September 11 twin towers attack was being 'broadcast live many TV viewers believed they were watching one of those disaster movies that proliferate endlessly on our TV screens' and that it was only 'by switching channels and finding the same pictures on all the stations that they finally understood that it was true'.

Aesthetically 9/11 was taken as an 'art of terrorism' in some quarters. Virilio (2002) quotes the avant-garde electronic composer Karlheinz Stockhausen as saying it was 'the greatest work of art there has ever been'. Seemingly unknown to Virilio, the Brit-artist Damien Hirst, too, claimed, in the British media, that those responsible for September 11 should indeed be congratulated because they achieved 'something which nobody would ever have thought possible' on an artistic level. The event was in 'bad boy' Damien Hirst's view "kind of like an artwork in its own right…wicked, but it was devised in this way for this kind of impact" and "was devised visually" (Guardian September 20, 2001).

Towards a Sociology of the Accident

As we argued at the beginning of this essay, although aspects of the work surrounding the art of the accident might be instructive, what is needed in future theoretical developments in the social and human sciences is a move towards a sociology of the accident. In this part of the essay we can indicate very briefly a starting point for what is required in this enterprise. As we have seen, for Virilio one of the problems of the highly mediatized modernities we inhabit today is that 'attack' and 'accident' are increasingly indistinguishable. We are unsure whether we are experiencing (terrorist) attack or system or network failure when we regularly consume news of events in the media, especially since the watershed events of 9/11 and the subsequent 'war on terror', itself a kind of mediatized never ending 'live' World War IV. The SARS crisis in China, Hong Kong and Canada, BSE scares in North America, train crashes in North Korea, plane crashes in the Middle East, electricity power failures in the USA, UK, Australia and mainland Europe to take some recent random examples are cases where an initial denial of terrorist attack shifts the 'blame' to technical failure of systems (in other words a 'real' accident) in such a way that the event is played down. It is only an accident proclaims the news reader after a few days hype, and therefore everyone can breathe a sigh of relief. What is actually needed is a concentration on the systems and the failure. 9/11, for instance, could be seen as a much an instance of systems failure as 'attack': failure of intelligence (CIA, FBI), governance (failure to act earlier against Al Qaeda), security (airport, airline), transport (aircraft), military (patrolling of skies) and so on.

Accident, along with elements of its philosophical make up as envisaged by Virilio, may be one of the concepts necessary to understand better the modernities and mobile city cultures of the twenty-first century globe. But the social science in which the sociology of the accident is urgently necessary is itself a reconstructed urban sociological project; a sociology as John Urry has put it 'beyond societies'. We need, instead, a new sociology of mobilities, of what we might call the mobility of modernities around the globe, especially of mobile city cultures. In a world of mobile city cultures the 'city is already there' (Virilio 2005a:) echoing Virilio's 'mental map' view of his own city, Paris (p. 5). As Virilio (2005a) puts it, 'Paris is portable' (p. 5). After 9/11, too, Virilio (2005a) claims that 'the tower has been motorised' and the 'very high building has become mobile' (p.18).

John Urry (2003), has rightly argued, in contemporary sociology the 'global' has been insufficiently theorized. One of the contributions Virilio has made more generally to thinking about modernities is to raise questions about the shrinking of time and space and the effect of the war induced technologies on the speeding up of that process: in other words, to thinking about the global anew. Virilio's development of the philosophical idea of the 'accident of accidents' (and it is the ancient notion that 'time is the accident of accidents' that Virilio is fond of quoting) is one way of rethinking the global, specifying as he does that it is the new communications technologies which have created the possibility of an accident that is no longer local but global; in other words, that would occur everywhere at the same time. Virilio (Virilio and Petit 1999) has stressed that 'time is the accident of accidents' and that 'we have reached the speed of light with e-mail, interactivity and telework' and that is why 'we are creating a similar accident'. An event such as 9/ 11, eliding accident and attack, was an example of a world wide accident because it was being screened live as it happened in real time all around the globe. That said, the theorizing of the accident by Virilio, though suggestive and (in his own phrase which he likes to use to describe his personal intellectual method and enterprise) 'implicit', is often at such a level of generality that it is not particularly helpful for a rigorous sociology of the accident. Though Virilio's language sometimes appears to import what John Urry (2003) describes as the 'new physics' into the equation of shrinking time and space, there is relatively little evidence of Virilio in actuality standing at the cutting edge of these contemporary breakthroughs in science. As other social theorists claim, it is better to view his work, alongside comparable theorists such as Jean Baudrillard, as a 'poetics' not a form of physics (Cubitt 2001). John Urry argues cogently that the social science enterprise of the twenty-first century which seeks to recruit the thinking of chaos and complexity from 'natural' sciences needs to conceive of systems which are always combining success and failure and are constantly on the edge of chaos. One of the reasons why the 'intellectual impostures' project of the physics pranksters Alan Sokal and Jean Bricmont (2003) attacking Virilio and others is so ill-judged is that it has not caught up with the 'complexity' of science today, never mind the contemporary complexity of theory in the human and social sciences. These systems which John Urry talks about are systems where Virilio's idea of the accident, a kind of built in component of the constant invention of new technologies, is integral. They are part of what we have called elsewhere dangerous modernity which requires an understanding of theory at the speed of light but also a great many more conceptual resources to better capture its global complexities (Redhead 2004a; Redhead 2004b). But even if this aesthetics of the accident is a necessary condition, it is certainly not sufficient. The sociology of the accident, in this view, needs to take into account thinking around the art of the accident but also clearly needs to move beyond it.

The Accident Museum

What can be said then, of a positive nature, about Virilio's contribution to a theory of the accident, catastrophe, network failure or breakdown in today's mobile city cultures? First, it is important to take Virilio's self-labeling seriously. He is by his own consistent admission 'a critic of the art of technology' and an overview of his life and career leave us in no doubt that he is an 'artist' rather than a social theorist in any conventional sense (Redhead 2004a; Rehead 2004b). He is a high modernist, without connection to the postmodernist and poststructuralist social theorists with whom he is routinely categorized and compared. Second, Virilio has had in mind for many years the development of what he calls a 'museum of accidents' to further aesthetically display his theory of the accident. In both these senses Virilio is closer to Damien Hirst and Karlheinz Stockhausen when they take the controversial view that an event like 9/11 is an aesthetic question. They are all involved, from different perspectives, in the enterprise of the art of the accident. They are artists rather than social theorists.

By the beginning of the new century it was the visual art of computer games which probably had most resonance

at least amongst the younger citizens of the 'collective world city' who were glued to their television screens as the planes crashed into the World Trade Center in New York on September 11, 2001 (Featherstone and Lash 1999). Remarkably, a Microsoft Flight Simulator 2000 computer game, which some commentators feared had been used by the hijackers of the planes, at least in part, to practice for their suicide mission, was on sale at the time of the event, retailing in world high street stores at about $80. It was withdrawn rapidly in the wake of the information, and moral, panic after 9/11 but its basic programme included the capacity of would-be pilots to pretend to crash Boeing 757s and 767s (the planes used in the actual attack on 9/11 in New York) into the World Trade Center. The graphic images of planes embedded in the higher parts of the towers in the game were uncannily like the moment of impact of the hijacked planes flying into the World Trade Center captured live on television and the internet for a global audience of billions. It is thought by some investigators that the hijackers who flew the planes into the World Trade Center on 9/11 had indeed learned to do so by playing on such simulation systems because of their closeness to 'reality'. In another game, WTC Defender, also quickly withdrawn after the September 2001 event, players could pretend to shoot down pilots as they attacked the World Trade Center.. If an aircraft got through, the buildings blew up. The game had been available to download over the internet.

The links between such 'new media' (computer games, information technology and so on) and the events of accident/attack which Virilio has analyzed (both the 1993 and 2001 World Trade Center catastrophes, for instance) is obviously of interest to students of Virilio given his idiosyncratic focus on the relationships between war, cinema and photography, though we do not have space to fully consider this focus here (see Redhead 2004a). However the significance of 9/11 in assessing Virilio's notion of the accident is more complicated than it might appear. For Virilio, unlike other French theorists of the image such as Gilles Deleuze, the cultural forms of cinema and television actually have nothing in common. Indeed Virilio has, on the contrary, argued the historical case that video technologies and what he calls technologies of simulation have been used for war (Redhead 2004a; Redhead 2004). In Virilio's version of the development of the logistics of perception, video was created after the Second World War in order to radio control planes and aircraft carriers. Further, Virilio has insisted that video came with World War II and it took twenty years after that conflict before it became a means of expression for artists. Nevertheless, Virilio has also noted that it is television (an old, or even dead, media) which is for him what he has to date constituted the actual museum of accidents. For years he has been reportedly planning to set up what he has termed a 'museum of the accident', first in Japan, in the 1980s, appropriately the home of the new technologies of the media, and then in other countries. For Virilio, television's art is in fact to be the site where all accidents happen. But for him it also is its only art. Television has for Virilio (Virilio and Petit 1999) already died:

> I would say that television is already dead with the advent of multimedia. It is clear that interactivity is the end of television. I would like to say that the example of television is already outdated. Just as photography gave rise to cinematography, video and television are today giving rise to infography. Television is already a surviving form of media. (P. 46)

The accident museum, or museum of accidents, in Virilio's phrase, certainly preserved for posterity the attacks of 9/11 and enables us to look at Virilio's thinking on the accident with the backdrop of the 'live' television pictures of the New York catastrophe, but Virilio has already started to give up on television as a cultural form (a medium he confesses he no longer watches much himself). He has gone on record as saying that:

> I think that the drilling of the gaze by television has gone so far that it is no longer possible to straighten out the situation in one hour. That being said, I am not opposed to showing catastrophes or accidents, because I believe a museum of accidents is necessary. (On this subject, remember that the tape of the Rodney King affair has been put in a museum.) However, I think that television has become the advertising or propaganda medium par excellence. We saw this during the Gulf War, with Timisoara, and we see it every day. Honestly, I am beginning to give up on television. I can no longer tolerate this kind of drilling. It would take the invention of another kind of television, but I believe it's too late. I think that there will be innovation with the new medium but not in the old one. The old medium has gone all the way to the end, which is to say to ITS end. In my opinion television is gone, but not video' (Virilio and Petit 1999:47).

So for Virilio the accident museum exists. He claims to have come across it and it is a TV screen, even if this particular form of technology is on the way out. The requirement of the accident or catastrophe as media event, as 9/11 showed only too well, is the urgency of the screening of the phases of the event 'live'. Television certainly still does still fulfill this requirement.

For Virilio though, what really counts is not so much the technology itself but the need to show what he sees as fallibilism in scientific and technological development in what is more and more an accelerated modernity filled with

danger (Redhead 2004b). The demand by Paul Virilio is for our global culture to go beyond an ideology of progress, linear and interrupted, excluding the importance of the mishap or the beneficial mistake. To expose the accident, to exhibit the accident, in the accident museum is the crucial task for Paul Virilio the artist. As artist and exhibition creator, the job is to expose the unlikely, to expose the unusual and yet inevitable, in recognizing the symmetry between 'accident' and 'substance'. The accident museum is necessary in Virilio's thinking in order to preserve for posterity the collapsing buildings, high speed plane crashes and other accidents (or attacks) of accelerated modernity.

As a self-proclaimed critic of the art of technology (rather than a conventional social theorist) Virilio, true to his word, jettisoned the televisual form and settled for the art gallery in his quest to preserve 9/11 along with hundreds of other disasters, catastrophes, urban network failures, crashes and explosions for his own real life museum of accidents. A little over a year after 9/11 Virilio (2003) helped to create the accident museum's first concrete realization in a major French contemporary art exhibition (officially labelled 'Ce Qui Arrive' in France), translated as Unknown Quantity in the English version of the catalog which included diverse textual commentary on the theory of the accident by Virilio as well as hundreds of photographs and other artefacts. Virilio created the exhibition with a number of other artists at the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain in Paris (opening in November 2002, closing in March 2003) explicitly incorporating photographic, video and other visual material from the event known as 9/11 as well as assorted plane crashes, earthquakes and high rise collapses from all over the world. Virilio, in the main, provided the concepts for this pioneering art exhibition while curator Leanne Sacramone mapped them onto a series of artworks. As an addition to the catalog of the exhibition Virilio interviewed Svetlana Aleksievich, the author of a book about Chernobyl victims and witnesses. Virilio's emerging ideas on the accident formed the text of the catalog's long introduction, under subheadings such as: the invention of accidents; the accident thesis; the museum of accidents; the future of the accident; the horizon of expectation and the unknown quantity. According to one hip contemporary art commentator on the Paris exhibition, 'as war between nation states gives way to the less defined area of international terrorism, so the distinction between acts of war, man made accidents and natural disasters becomes less distinguishable' (Patrick 2003). This situation 'in turn leads to a panorama in which acts of God and events such as Chernobyl and September 11 together occupy an undifferentiated position at the center of the world stage'. Paul Virilio's museum of accidents, then, in this context is a twenty-first century equivalent to the 'traditional war memorial's "lest we forget"'.

Paul Virilio has taught us that in the 'crepuscular dawn' [6] of our twenty-first century modernities the attack and the accident are becoming indistinguishable. The 'art of the accident', or what has also elsewhere been termed 'apocalyptic art' [7], is one credible response to this dilemma. However, such aesthetic practice, a deconstructive play on the distinction between attack and accident, is certainly not sufficient to help us to theorize the new modernities which are catching up with the various new and old capitalisms on offer around the globe. It leaves us, strangely, exhibiting a kind of ghoulish fascination [8] with the effects of the failure of systems; 'rubber necking' at the art gallery and the accident museum or tuning in with compassionless glee to the reports in the media of the latest road crash statistics, a state of mind where 'what people watch above all on TV are the weekend's road accident figures, the catastrophes' [9] (Baudrillard 2004a:61). Or, as Virilio claims [10], (Virilio 2005a:111) 'elsewhere begins here'.

Endnotes

1. As the call for papers put it for an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Conference on Urban Vulnerability and Network Failure, organized by the Center for Sustainable Urban Regional Futures (SURF) at the University of Salford in the United Kingdom in April 2004.

2. Mike Gane (Gane, 2003:162) suggests that one trend in French social theory is indeed a 'shift towards the sacred'. Virilio's trajectory over the years epitomizes this shift (Redhead 2004a) and is shared to some extent by his friend Luce Irigaray, Virilio's main long term connection to French feminism.

3. The acknowledgement for the inspiration for this reversible phrase goes to Virilio and Lotringer (2005).

4. For example, a conference entitled 'The Dromocratic Condition' at the University of Newcastle, Newcastle, UK, March 2005, followed the concept of 'the dromocratic condition' coined by British academic John Armitage, who has, in recent years, done much to publicize Virilio in the English speaking world and in particular showcased Virilio's book City of Panic in the journal Cultural Politics (Armitage 2005). The call for papers for the conference explicitly posited the idea, for subsequent discussion, of the Virilio influenced

'dromocratic condition' taking over today from Jean-Francois Lyotard's 1980s notion of the 'postmodern condition' (Lyotard 1984).

5. Originally entitled in French Ce Qui Arrive, the English version of the book was published by Verso (Virilio 2002) with the more '9/11' oriented title Ground Zero to fit in with its miniseries of books on September 11, 2001. Virilio actually has a little more to say about 9/11 and its effects on urban culture in later work (Virilio 2005a).

6. Virilio and Lotringer 2002 is the source for this pregnant, enigmatic phrase.

7. For instance, a film like director Danny Boyle's Twenty Eight Days Later (screenplay by fiction writer Alex Garland), released a year after September 11, 2001, but filmed in 2001, has been tarred with this brush, along with other contemporary art and culture; see New Statesman, July 21, 2003.

8. The health warning which Virilio's work should bear is evident in this rather weird fascination with the accident, catastrophe or disaster or spectacular failure of modernity. The distinct problem of this position can be seen when you compare the similar fascination exhibited in the twentieth century by a distinctly unpalatable thinker like Ernst Junger. Virilio (2005a:114, 117) himself has quoted and cited Junger in his often bizarre referencing system (Virilio 2005a:143).

9. The words are those of Virilio's friend and countryman Jean Baudrillard in conversation with Francois L'Yvonnet. Paul Hegarty (Hegarty 2004) argues quite correctly, in an excellent book on Jean Baudrillard, that Paul Virilio is the theorist closest to Baudrillard's ideas (though he points out that they differ in subtle ways) and that Virilio is the one person he has engaged with most over the years. As Mike Gane (Gane 2003) notes, for instance, Virilio worked with Baudrillard on the journal Traverses between 1975 and 1990. Baudrillard contributes one of the other books in Verso's mini-series on September 11, 2001 (Baudrillard: 2004b). Both Baudrillard (2005) and Virilio (2005a) are now published by Berg in England. For a critical comparison of Baudrillard and Virilio, and their intertwined histories, see Redhead, 2004a and Redhead, 2004b.

10. The original French version of Virilio's book Ville Panique (City of Panic in Julie Rose's English translation, Virilio 2005a) had the subtitle 'Ailleurs Commence Ici' which was dropped in the English version.

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Biotech Barbeque: A Regulatory Figuration and Policy Making

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Plant Biotechnology in Canada

What does it mean when a policy maker refers to the regulation of biotechnology as a matter of barbeques and 'dinner theatre'? How do actors interact in the 'biotech community'? Drawing on in-depth interviews at all stages in the development and farming of genetically modified (GM) crops, this article brings the process sociology of figurations to clarify the social and informational dynamics between insiders and outsiders (the public) which we argue has formed around the regulation of GM plants in Canada. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, most public discussions of 'biotech' give the impression of a homogeneous industry focused on cloning and the genetic modification of existing organisms ('GMOs') such as plants and animals. This belies the diversity of the sector. A fear of the unknown, of risk and threat to fundamental ontological categories is summarized by fears of monstrous life forms and the dangers of attempting to manage chance and necessity through new technologies (Caygill 1996). Closer investigation reveals a diversity of activities, mostly at a molecular rather than organism scale (Gottweis 1995; Kloppenburg 1998). This challenges regulatory-legal frameworks and the ability of the public and existing regulators to 'know' both the actuality of biotechnology methods and the products. Public fears may not be primarily directed at the products of biotechnology but their loss of collective grasp on the governance of science and of everyday products.

Agricultural biotechnology is the second largest sector of the biotech industry after human health, representing about 12.5% of dedicated biotech firms in Canada. In 2003, Canada's growing biotechnology industry included 417 dedicated biotechnology firms, mostly concentrated in large population centers (Niosi and Bas 2001), up 67% over five years despite a dip in the venture capital market in 2001.1

Most research on agricultural biotechnology emphasizes the 'rigorous scientific testing' that products must undergo prior to entering markets in the EU and the United States (OECD 1992). 'Science accounts' of the regulatory process, say little about the social arrangements that create regulations or are involved in regulatory assessments (Barrett and Abergel 2000; Dunlop 2000; Newell 2002). Most critical analyses have focused on questions of property, privacy and the surveillance of ever larger collectivities through databank technologies (Rabinow 1996; Rose 1996; Gerlach 2002). A social science approach to what participants refer to as the 'biotech community' extends this literature. It problematizes the tendency toward technical debate focused only on procedures such as labeling and includes the division between regulatory insiders and an excluded public (Kalaitzandonakes and Phillips 2000; see Mansour and Bennet 2000).

What are the social dynamics of what we will argue is a regulatory 'figuration' (cf. Elias 1991)? This network or social world is reducible to neither a scientific logic, nor a political economy of the interests of those involved and can be said to include relations between offices and objects as well as persons (the traditional 'process sociology' focus). There has been some attention to regulatory structures but this tends not to focus as much on day to day regulatory interactions and practices (Black 1998). The present research illustrates the fluid and close-knit social networks, the importance of insider-outsider divisions in the regulation of agricultural biotechnologies in Canada.

Insider Viewpoints on the Regulatory Process

Our interviews focused on plant biotechnology and the actors involved in the regulatory approvals process in Canada: Plants with Novel Traits (PNTs) and Novel Foods (such as genetically modified corn and soy beans (more colloquially known as GM corn and GM soy).[1]Similar to the United States and Japan, Canada's product-oriented regulatory approach is based on the principle that assessments of the risks of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), such as PNTs, should be based on the characteristics of the organism or the product, rather than the method by which it was produced. This contrasts greatly with the European Union's process-oriented approach (Jasanoff 1995; Levidow et al. 1996; Levidow, Carr, and Wield 2000).

Interviews

Figure 1 lists 28 semi-structured interviews across the biotech community (Shields et al 2004) which were part of a larger project on information flows and the changing governance structures of the Federal Government of Canada. [2] One of the surprises of this research was that a relatively small number comprises both the key biotech actors and the agencies and functions involved in the regulatory process across the entire industry from scientist to farm labourer and bureaucrats. This limited number and the confidential nature of commercial processes as well as regulatory cases hampered the in-depth interview approach and the use of transcripts. The quotations presented are a guarded sample.

Figure 1. Interviews

Departments / Institutional Actors	Total	Offices / Representatives Interviewed
Environment Canada (EC)	4	2 Biosafety 1 Biodiversity 1 Cartagena Protocol
Agriculture and Agri-Foods Canada AFFC)	2	2 Research Scientists
Health Canada (HC)	1	1 Evaluations, Microbial Hazards
Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)	3	1 Plant Biosafety Office 1 Office of Biotechnology 1 Evaluator (biotech specialist)
Industry Canada (IC)	2	2 Biotechnology Regulatory Virtual Office (BRAVO)
Industry	7	3 Product Developer (public and private sector) 1 User (farmer and silo operator) 3 Distributors (incl. transportation and commodity broking)
Expert Advisory Committee	3	3 Canadian Biotechnology Advisory Committee (CBAC)
Independent Consultants[3]	2	1 Agricultural Biotechnology 1 Agriculture Forestry
Biotechnology Industry Associations	4	1 Agricultural Biotechnology 1 Agriculture Forestry

Key players were identified from government documents and a regulatory 'map' developed early on in the project (Shields et al. 2002; see also Figure 2). Once the first few participants had been contacted and interviewed they suggested other players in a semi-snowball sampling. Through asking the interviewees to help redraw our map and locate themselves within it, an initial, rigid image of a network and linear process (see Figure 2) was progressively displaced by a fluid model of a regulatory system which respondents repeatedly described as an 'insider community'.

Regulatory Process - 'Six Steps'?

All respondents avowed that the biotechnological regulatory system was 'extremely complex', yet the number

of players involved is not extensive. The process can be summarized in only half a dozen steps and 'there are a small number of evaluators, you get to know them…' (Biotechnology Industry Product Developer Informant). The process for Plants with Novel Traits is often described to the public as 'six steps to safety' (see Fig. 2 after Crop Protection Institute of Canada 2000). The simplicity of these six steps belies the recursive and multiple interactions in actual cases, but this is not unusual in regulatory environments. The 'six steps are a shorthand that is invariably backed by an extensive 'Appendix', even in pamphlets, detailing the different regulatory options for different PNTs such as foods, animal feeds and discussing the environmental safety of PNTs which are released into nature. The point to be made is not that 'six steps' is a public relations gloss, but that it is a map which is useless as a guide because it lacks qualification in the form of other information and understandings which supplement its steps with the knowledge that the process is not linear but more akin to an extended conversation between several parties - perhaps even like the talk at a dinner party which may return to earlier topics at any point and which subsumes many side discussions which happen at their pace.

Not only can a developer interact with different evaluators and regulatory jurisdictions throughout the development process, but so too do the evaluators. After conducting the first interviews it became immediately apparent that the regulatory field is composed of vague boundaries where objects and people are continually moving around between institutions or actors (Fig. 1 left column). These defy univocal categorization and undercut the pure science ideals of the regulatory process. While an approval may be required from Environment Canada (EC), they may in turn contact the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), Agriculture and Agri-Foods Canada (AAFC) or Health Canada (HC) to define the set of evaluations that will be necessary. These points are illustrated in the stress on the interpersonal and the comment that,

> Many aspects of Environment Canada are based on interpersonal relationships both within the department as well as across departments and internationally. For example, when we are faced with petitions you receive a 'heads up' email from other departments and then you strike up a working group, first within the department and then sign-off to medium level interdepartmental group. You develop a common answer and move up the ladder (Environment Canada Informant).

This is not as ad hoc as its sounds. Product developers outside of the regulatory agencies might have to present their product to multiple joint-departmental evaluations but understood that there were possibilities to negotiate the identity and nature of their products, none of which existed beyond trial stage or which might exist only as a trait, a capability or a process. Developers working in labs 'front-line' understanding of the regulatory process is broader but more linear:

> ....The first stage is concept validation, in this stage we consider what would make a difference for example "if only the world had..."; the second stage is prototype validation, where the scientists work at constructing these objects that will change the world; and, the third stage is the field trial, where we set out to examine and assess the risks and success of the objects (Biotechnology Industry - Product Developer Informant).

This description focuses entirely on scientists as actors and decision makers - as prime movers, regardless of the 'other hats' scientists may wear or careers they may pursue and the intersecting roles of entrepreneurs, managers, farmers, lawyers and policy makers and a wide array of disciplines and professions drawn in as consultants to regulators.

Categories and Objects

Complexity arises in part because products do not fit easily into neat divisions between flora, livestock or human health (Figure 2 4abc respectively). Not surprisingly, the objects of regulation in the biotechnology sector are 'boundary objects' whose instability continually challenges established conventions and requires active reworking of categories and negotiations over the fit between concepts and material processes (Star1999).

The regulatory processes for Plants with Novel Traits (PNTs) and Novel Foods (NF) are presented in official documents as rigorous and standardized. One simple example is the Domestic Substance List (DSL). The DSL was created to provide a scientific classification of biotech products and how they are to be assessed, thereby removing value judgments and unnecessary examinations. However, when such standards are implemented they make invisible the negotiation and social labour required for their development (Bowker and Star 1999:44). The more people adopt and incorporate the regulatory process into their actions without questioning its origin, the more hidden the social—and politic—origins become. Because of the limited expertise in the field, biotech product developers participated

extensively in creating the regulatory process. The regulations summarize a set of working routines, expectations and an outlook. Policies are created post hoc after regulatory experiences considered exemplary. Lists and procedural documents testify also to a habitus or modus operandii which has responded over the last decade not to routine but to continual difference, to non-conforming objects, cases and applications.

Tactically, developers may choose (although not without debate) which category or definition their innovations fall under. Based on this, similar products by more—or less—knowledgeable, or more—or less—strategic developers may be subject to different regulations even though their development process is the same. Thus insider knowledge is technical (biological) and procedural but is also social in a micro-political sense:

> While web-sites, such as BRAVO [Biotechnology Regulatory Virtual Office], can give developers and consumers a framework, it's knowledge and people that count. Personal experience becomes a valuable commodity. For example, independent consultants who are ex-bureaucrats or industry practitioners have access to the 'market-niche' and they know who to call and know where to spend the time and where not to (Regional Biotechnology Association Informant).

A formal system of formidable regulatory hurdles, professional jargon and shared laboratory skills and experience differentiates these insiders from outsiders including less experienced biotechnology entrepreneurs, foreign competitors, nonexperts including consumers and the public at large who have an important stake in environmental safety and the quality of food systems. [4] Private sector managers who described themselves as long term 'insiders' conceded that, 'The DSL and regulatory process are clear but if you are new it could be difficult. Environment Canada knows us, we're NOT brand spanking new!' (Environment Canada Informant).

Figure 2. 'Six steps to safety': Biotechnology regulation in Canada.

1. Canadian Institute for Health Research and other codes of practice for laboratories and staff working with genetically-altered organisms.

2. Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) field trial confinement guidelines

3. PNT transportation and import controls

4. Either
   a. CFIA or Environment Canada assess environmental safety and impact of PNT crops on nontarget organisms, biodiversity, potential as a pest and for weed infestations,
   b. Or CFIA assesses livestock feed toxicity, stability, environmental impacts, potential to reach the human food chain,
   c. Or Health Canada assesses safety of Novel Foods: nutritional data, animal studies of toxicity, allergenicity, dietary impact

5. Registration

6. Market Release

The Community of Established Insiders

In our interviews, reputations appeared as a form of capital, of the ability to act and persuade others to act in desired ways.

> When you are going through the regulatory process you are assigned an evaluator and because there are a small number of evaluators you get to know them. These relationships are a value within the regulatory process because knowing the process and the evaluators places us above our competitors (Biotechnology Industry- Product Developer Informant).

Without its own labs and field trials, regulators had to rely on the ways a particular innovation was actualized or brought forth amongst plants by the product developer in their labs and trials. Trust is central (see below). The intangibility of 'novel traits' means that a consensus has to be formed around each product and regulatory process. According to one informant, 'this boils down to good working relations within this group and even with international relations; people get to know you and how you work to develop trust and distrust' (Environment Canada Informant).

Regulatory examiners described how they attempted to take into account both the tangible (things that are material and can be directly experienced or measured) and the intangible (such as probable risks, capacities and qualities and the objects created as novel traits are actualized in the lifecycle of a plant, in ecological relations or in the food supply chain). [5] PNTs are not only boundary objects. They are less actual, material organisms and more a type of virtual object - one that involves activities and objects that are present but not necessarily tangible nor necessarily represented - this is the source of the equivocation which is possible in categorizing these objects. Much of the conception and development of biotechnology is undertaken in this virtual mode. Before products can be developed research scientists must first question 'what is needed', and this is accomplished through risk assessments. As virtual products at the forefront of research are progressively actualized (for example, as they move from inspiring stories and computer analyses of r-DNA code to investments that demand actual lab space and field trials) the regulatory net becomes more concrete and more constricting. In some cases they only become visible or represented after considerable working up in laboratories or in application filings. "Making visible…is the crucial investment in forms that enable rule and management" (Luque 2001:192).

The challenges to the regulator and to those outside of the research and development process stem in part from the virtuality of PNTs and the difficulties of adequately representing them. The appeal to 'rules', and other attempts to standardize and affix norms, is indicative of the challenge posed by the virtual objects being regulated and the nonstandardized character forced on the regulatory process. This affects attempts to collectively manage conflict and resolve ambiguity of overlapping mandates amongst agencies.

> There is a rule in the biotech regulatory community that you should never carry out individual responses but formulate a joint response when officially addressing an issue of stakeholder concern. A joint response is intended to give stakeholders an impression of "consistency and transparency", that they are dealing with a unified regulatory network (Canadian Food Inspection Agency Informant).

Not only are relationships a form of 'capital' they require constant maintenance, re-working - a continual labour of performance. [6] The working up of insider status and reliability or trustworthiness doubles the working up of the intangible objects which are being regulated. [7]

The collective nature of insidership was illustrated throughout our interviews. For example, there were many concerns about 'perceived' conflicts of interests arising from the working relations between AAFC and the CFIA. For example, many stakeholders have become concerned with the potentially contradictory goals pursued by a single organizational unit. Some firms perceive public regulators as competitors because they also operate national research laboratories (Newell 2003:58). For example, outside experts and the public have questioned the contradiction between the mandate of AAFC research branches to promote agricultural biotechnology in Canada, while the CFIA is responsible for regulating it under the Plant Protection Act, The Feeds Act, and Seeds Act. Both report to the same Minister. Yet, independent consultants rationalize the arrangement:

> There is a difference between a 'conflict of interest' and a 'perceived' conflict of interest. The only way to solve this 'perceived' conflict of interest is to increase levels of openness and transparency. We need to develop clear Departmental mandates in addition to integration. I don't believe that the problems with the CFIA can be solved by reporting to another Minister, but instead the need to change their internal structuring. Departments need to figure out their own roles (Biotech Experts Informant).

Insiders' loyalty to the regulatory system, community, or 'figuration' (see below) as a collective achievement meant that although definitions and understandings of products and issues might conflict at points throughout the system, elsewhere these objects could work together or even be dependent on each other (Mol and Law, 1994:659). The players, elements and objects within the system continually informed each other to maintain a sense of continuity and even to create a consistent 'surface' that conceals variation and tension from outsiders. When respondents offered that the regulatory system was 'extremely complex', they in effect demonstrated their power or importance as necessary guides, but presented an article of faith and a first step into the community - a first rule that initiates (such as the interviewers) should subscribe to.

Regardless of how this relationship is perceived, it is important that one recognizes the impact that social relationships have on the actions of others. Clearly, even amongst biotech community insiders, the regulatory process is not purely 'scientific'. Within the fluid, social world of biotechnology and the organizations found within it, a further network of networks can be discerned. Each actor such as a Department or firm maintains its own micro-world of ties to others within the macro-world of a surrounding network. As evidenced in the extensive use of non-

disclosure agreements, a stress on corporate secrecy and an emphasis on the complexity of the regulatory system and the scientific training required, firms seek micro-control over their products and information not only through agreements with farmers not to reuse seeds, through sterile seeds or 'terminator' genetic technologies, but also by limiting the divulgence of information and intellectual property in patents and very broad patent applications to exclude competitors from the field (Hayenga 1998:7). The dynamics of ties across microworlds allows us to observe how certain subjects occupying key nodes form and deform discrete groups. Subjects occupying key network positions may also be gatekeepers who mange flows of information crucial to the activity of others (see Lesser 1998:3).

But particularly amongst career bureaucrats who might be most expected to recognize these processual and political qualities of policy making, but who were new to the field, there was a sense that 'knowledge management' or other information technology or simple coordinating offices would resolve contradictions and bring clarity. This would take the form of a rather mechanical process which would have the advantage of being 'transparent' and easily audited. For example, BRAVO (Biotechnology Regulatory Virtual Office, Industry Canada) was established as an attempt to 'level the playing field' for developers by providing a single 'portal' for developers submitting PNTs into the regulatory process:

> ...to facilitate regulatory compliance, provide contact names and allow for quicker commercialization. It is a 'how to' guide and also an objective demystification of the regulatory landscape for the consumer, making the consumer aware that regulations do exist. We are here to explore biotechnology and build knowledge (BRAVO Informant).

Other informants were more sceptical about the agency which was the antithesis of long-nurtured insider 'savoir faire' and an attempt to negate social with informational networks. [8]Our sense was that it found its more ambitious goals frustrated by the need, in the final analysis, for applicants and regulators to interact over any meaningful development. And, not only was it an information office grafted on to the main regulatory interactions around biotech objects, but it fitted imperfectly with both insider process and outsider's demand for trustworthy information. Meanwhile, the agency's own respondents did not seem aware of the lack of consumer confidence in their focus on 'quicker commercialization' and 'making the consumer aware'.

The Regulatory Figuration

A regulatory figuration is a useful way of modeling the both the community of insiders and the outsiders revealed in our interviews. The attempts to fix norms and to demonstrate the value of insider knowledge and bio-science training to the exclusion of outsiders fit well with a process-sociological understanding of 'figurations' of established relationships. 'Figurations' are dynamic constellations of social relationships (Elias and Scotson 1994). The stress on the emergence and different paces of change is a further advantage of a figurational approach which,

> encourages us to consider innovation in terms of its temporal dimension: that is to say, particular innovations represent the product of generations of interwoven, interdependency ties and do not suddenly appear fully formed, as often is assumed in studies... (Dopson and Waddington 1996:1141).

This is the starting point for a properly sociological approach grounded in game theory which emphasizes three aspects of networks. Dopson and Waddington points out that these go beyond the typical analysis of interactions found in the policy literature in four ways (Dopson and Waddington 1996) to which we will add a fifth:

- Webs of power which are simultaneously stable and in change;
- The interweaving of actions between multiple players who conflict as well as collaborate (Elias 1978b:95; Elias, 1983:141);.
- A stress on social relations between positions, rather than individuals;
- The inevitability of unanticipated effects of combined actions of many actors; and,
- Outsiders need to be included as a structural group produced by interactions.

Both the public and independent experts are present only in symbolic form within the regulatory process - and often in terms of symbols which marked their exclusion or lack of 'fitness' to participate. There is thus a strong sense of established insiders and outsiders (Elias and Scotson 1994). The advantage of Elias's approach is its inclusiveness

of these excluded actors[9]. These features allow a figurational analysis to operate both at a critical, analytical level while taking up individual occupational points of view and the self-image of committed actors who, in their view, are doing worthwhile jobs while facing others who do not understand the nature of their work, in this case life science research and biotechnological products. The absence of the public and expert outsiders from the internal discussion of the regulatory process to this point will have been noted by some readers (see below). Elias develops the concept of figuration as a way of uniting analyses of insiders and outsiders in social or institutional networks. These unhelpful dichotomies also include the division between the individual and society, stability versus instability, and forms of 'process reduction' which simplify the interdependence of actors or the conditions in which any plan is implemented. The characteristics of figurations can be summarized as:

Established insiders attribute superior characteristics to their own members, such as science training and experience, in the biotechnology regulatory case. Unspoken social conventions limit contact with or exclude others, such as the public or those not employed by developers and regulatory agencies, specifically. Praise gossip and blame gossip maintains a taboo on contact, lowering the status of agencies or actors who deal with the public, such as BRAVO.

- Established insiders attribute to themselves a charisma which is internalized to become part of personal identities while outsiders are stigmatized; and
- Outsiders internalize this inferiority, accept their ranking or are forced to act in terms of the status attributed to them by insiders.

In the biotech figuration, established insiders are marked by their tendency to describe the network as the biotech 'community'—a powerful but also a naïve metaphor which begs to be 'unpacked'. A further major characteristic of the 'established' is shared professional experience, objects and places (labs, companies—see Gieryn 1999; Gieryn 2006). Their vocational habitus includes a faith in 'science' and an insistence on justification of goals and of decision-making purely on 'scientific' principles and tests (Boltanski and Thevenot 2000). A corollary of this is an unwillingness to explain these techniques to lay participants and a frustration with both criticism and negative public perceptions regarding the wider implications of genetic biotechnology. 'Science' becomes a shared symbol amongst established insiders. Elias goes so far as to argue that these aspects of figurations establish a 'personality structure' derived from the demands of interdependent action with others within a given figuration (Elias 2000:213-14).

> This make-up, the social habitus of individuals forms, as it were, the soil from which grow the personal characteristics through which an individual differs from other members of his society. In this way something grows out of the common language which the individual shares with others and which is certainly a component of his social habitus—a more or less individual style, what might be called an unmistakable individual handwriting that grows out of the social script (Elias 1991:182).

In the world of biotechnology, 'citizenship' is defined by membership within the collective forms and adherence to the differentiation between insider and outsider. These are key to defining and policing attitudes and understandings of biotechnology in the face of a disordered public sphere 'outside'3—not simply a network of practices, ideologies or merely emergent norms.

The intangibility of objects and nature of knowledge and information in biotech regulation emerged as significant topics in interviews with both insiders and outsiders. Elias focused mainly on inter-personal relationships or dynamic constellations at the community level as a way of understanding the creation of group identity and the exercise of power through it (Elias & Scotson 1994). However, figurational sociology can be usefully extended beyond interpersonal relationships to objects which mediate those relationships, including forces and processes (after Elias 2000:261). In this, we draw on insights from actor network theory (Law & Hassard 1999) and the sociology of scientific classification (Bowker and Star 1999).

Dinner Theatre: Knowledge and Information in Regulatory Figurations

The figuration lies not only in social interactions but in stocks of information and in understandings. Keeping up with ever-evolving developments in biotechnology, the regulators usually develop interdepartmental working-groups that include representatives from industry and industry associations. These groups anticipate future sciences,

respond to industry breakthroughs, consult with interested stakeholders, and shape policy guidelines that may become legislation. Established insiders share a history of direct, face-to-face and informal interaction, a vector that appears to be essential in communicating understandings of the nature (i.e. ontology), value, risks and regulatory approaches to specific intangibles which are articulated indirectly using both conceptual and affectual modes of communication. Respondents latched on to the metaphor of one informant that their meetings are like a dinner theater (Environment Canada Informant). Thus, in some cases, suburban summer barbeques might be the actual site of meetings or the key moments in regulatory consensus.

Sense-making

Established insiders exploit the need for non-codified knowledge as well as background process knowledge and high levels of trust (Polanyi 1962; Collins 2001; Patriotta 2003) (see below). What is not articulated includes experience of the practical context the overall goals and the degree of risk associated with different biotechnological procedures (at laboratory and at industry scales). Knowledge-based theories of organizations conventionally see this as embodied, idiosyncratic and uncodified (Nelson and Winter 1982; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995). However, as part of a figuration, information and knowledge are not just a cognitive frame, shared practical skills nor a collective outlook. They are also institutionalized in social and material terms as a formative context which is the background condition for knowledge. Knowledge can be understood in more nuanced terms as 'sense-making' (Unger, 1987; Ciborra and Lanzara 1994).6

Over the last decade, regulators faced new challenges including lack of experience with genetic technologies, relatively new protocols for assessing the behavior and impact of genetically modified organisms and both possible ecological risks and public fears. This has meant that there has been relatively little established and routinized knowledge and a great deal of information to manage.

> An examiner is first trained through documents but picks up most of their knowledge through one-on-one training and discussions with managers and other co-workers (Environment Canada Informant).

In the informational economy of this and other regulatory figurations, the power and process dynamics of virtual objects are all important aspects of the regulatory figuration which should not be collapsed into a single register, whether sociological, informational or biological. Biotech objects come to be understood abstractly within the regulatory system in terms of their intersection with the DSL, not in their actuality. Substantial-seeming representations of rather virtual objects are an important ontological and economic output of the regulatory figuration (Jessop 2000; Luque 2001:191; OECD 2001).

The difficulty of visualizing a modified enzyme, for example, compared with a genetically modified tomato or other organism poses a constant challenge to public attempts to engage with biotechnological innovations. For biotechnology, the primary representation is the genomic map that is often taken as literal representation of the reality of the gene, despite the shift in ontological register from the concrete to the abstraction of a representation in a symbolic language. The notion of mapping assists in the slide from abstract representation to concrete reality by presenting a virtuality, the genome, and by permitting the conceit of this virtual territory to be imagined in terms of private property.

Trust and Agricultural Practice

Trust and mutual obligation is embedded within relationships that have become institutionalized as a figuration. Trust undergirds the collective construction and definition of objects. This must eventually be communicated to farmers and others in the agricultural sector such as silo operators and transporters, whom we also interviewed. Dramatic moral tales and apocryphal stories abound in establish the how, what and why of PNTs and other GMOs in the farmyard -the church-going habits of (therefore trusted) local growers, the multipurpose nature of dump trucks used to carry agricultural commodities, the Port of Montreal, Japanese inspectors with microscopes, and so on.

Trust is an assumption grounded in a feeling that may or may not be shared by a group of people. Examples of the establishment of trust in biotechnology include certification; familiarity (for example, trust increases the more times someone delivers on a promise); and mutual obligation (for example, all players involved have something to

lose if they do not deliver). All regulators depend on trust. Above all, at the operational level of farms, grain elevators and grain transporters,

> It really depends on the grain as to the extent that we clean the bins and separate the seeds. Corn hasn't become an issue yet, so there isn't a need for separate storage bins like there is with soy beans. With soy beans we would lose business if we didn't segregate. We trust our growers and transporters to have separated them and cleaned out their trucks. If we transport our load and the seeds are found mixed then we lose our premium, which is a lot of money to lose (Storage).

There are many practical and financial constraints placed on the grain transportation industry which make segregation and cleaning difficult, if not impossible. Some examples of the difficulties placed at the operational level are: cost of additional grain trailers for segregating GMO from non-GMO; the time required for thoroughly cleaning after each load; and, the extra staff required for handling the extra loads. Furthermore, there is little recognition and financial aid provided by the Canadian government at the operational level. In effect, the entire system of 'purity' depends on the professionalism of agricultural workers and operators.

> Each company we truck to has a different sheet to fill out stating that we have cleaned the truck and each sheet may require a different method. We trust our drivers to sweep the trailer out before going to load. We can't afford to have separate trucks or to specially clean each truck after each load. We know that trucking is becoming an issue with GMO and non-GMO but we don't want it to because we can't afford to change our procedures (Grain Transporter).

While the regulatory network is to be 'science-based', it becomes evidently clear that the regulations at the operational level are 'trust-based' and depend on the professionalism of individuals working in the agricultural sector[10]. The degree of cleanliness of silos was described as being determined in practice by the filtration standard of a 'ShopVac' (the most widely available and inexpensive contractor's vacuum available in Canada). 'Organic' ends as a probability - 90% pure, 98%, 99%...? The reality is that biotechnology products enter into an existing agricultural figuration of seeding practice, farmyard equipment and grain elevator technologies. In order to analyze the risks and politics associated with biotechnology development, attention needs to be paid to the messy objects, social networks and informal working relations of the agricultural sector in Canada.

The Public

Strikingly absent in the regulatory system are members or representatives of the public. Any such voices, whether public interest organizations such as the Sierra Club or Council of Canadians (Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy et al. 2000), or independent scientists such as the Royal Society of Canada are cast as outsiders to the process (Environment Canada 2001; The Royal Society of Canada 2001).

> The regulatory system may look rosier from the inside. Because of our science based focus we sometimes overlook problems the public may have in actually navigating the network and understanding its general goals (Canadian Food Inspection Agency Informant).

Problems of public exclusion were identified throughout the biotech community interviews with regard to 'consumer awareness'. For example, the biotechnology regulatory process is to be transparent and to consist of 'value-free scientific knowledge'. Furthermore, the product approvals of various departments are supposed to be open to public scrutiny and the evaluative process and criteria required to make approvals are to be explicitly formulated and easily accessible, so that a formal system of accountability exists across the network.

While the biotech community emphasized that the regulatory network was transparent and constructed by 'value-free science', they also emphasized the status of industry and stakeholder knowledge over that of the consumer and general public. In their words, there is little time and few resources allotted to educating the public—'John Q Public' lacks the requisite knowledge needed to understand biotechnology. Some independent consultants went further to state:

> Communicating to a public (and media) that is scientifically illiterate about a technically complex issue, where the devil is very often in the detail, is a struggle for any group. I'm not convinced that the public really cares about the regulatory system above wanting to be confident that it is protecting the consumer. However, the regulatory system could go farther to be more transparent and involve the public (Biotechnology Consultant Informant).

Many of the interviewees attempt to construct 'the public' as a homogenous object that lacks education and cannot assimilate information shared with them. Using 'scientific discourse' as a justification for the lack of knowledge transfer and lack of transparency illustrates the power inherent in these discourses, as well as the difference between 'informing' the public and making the public 'knowledgeable'. In our interviews, there is genuine incomprehension of public hostility from scientists and professionals working on biotechnology, which may lead to the conclusion that something is needed in their education to help science workers reflect ethically on their figurational status as insiders.

The biotech communities preferred field of debate is labeling, a marketing concern with managing consumer knowledge and the most vocal of critics via careful control over information without granting any opportunity for the formation of alternative and independent knowledges or sources of information. Tied into international trade treaties and food safety regimes it also binds state regulators (Kalaitzondonakes and Phillips 2000; United Nations Environment Programme 2002). Closely bound up with narratives of progress and the 'promise of biotechnology' itself, the marketing of specific products might be described as the fulfilling a legitimation and normalization function for the biotechnology community.

At the same time as fluid networks characterize the internal operations of the biotech regulatory system, this institutional structure is also a figurational formation which fixes meanings, builds a formative context for the situated knowledge of the 'experts' and reproduces a hard division between insiders and the public and other outsiders. Dissenting experts, who have included the Royal Society of Canada (2001), often find themselves excluded from insider status and attacked by both industry and regulators.

Concluding Comments

The biotech case is one of many existing regulatory figurations—and of figurations still to come in economies dependent on specialized knowledge, elusive objects or virtual products. Our argument has emphasized the highly interactive and socially busy world of biotech regulation, as evidenced in the quotations in this article - 'the need to consult', to formulate a 'joint response', to 'smooth out complications', to maintain 'an impression of consistency…' or to 'make the consumer aware'. Throughout this paper we have argued that the appeal to 'rules', lists and maps such as 'six steps' and other attempts at presenting a standardized regulatory process is indicative of the challenge of novelty and the fluidity of the objects of biotech regulation. But rather than a complex regulatory system in Canada, we argue that the regulatory process is easily recognizable and intelligible as a regulatory figuration made obscure by established insider informants, summed up in the argument that biotechnology regulation was too complex to be understood by neophytes or the public.

By drawing on the sociology of science and science studies literature, we have extended Elias's figurational approach beyond the social register to objects relations and to the informational dynamics of these social constellations, especially in the case of virtual objects or objects whose status is equivocal. In addition, we have emphasized the constitutive importance of outsiders to regulatory figurations.

The present research has illuminated the virtualities and social relations that play within the biotech regulatory process. It has further uncovered the active relation of insiders and outsiders leading to the argument that a figurational approach provides a stronger analytical base for understanding the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion and ultimately for understanding the sense-making and regulatory outcomes and outputs of the regulatory system. Front and centre, a regulatory figuration involves the fluctuating play of power at a micro social level, the fluidity of knowledge and the way expertise is a status established and conferred by insider membership. These are summarized in our respondents notion of regulation as 'dinner theatre'.

Clearly, even amongst biotech community 'insiders', the regulatory process is not purely 'scientific'. Denying the social leads outsiders to an objectified, static and impotent understanding of what takes place in the regulatory process. This regulatory figuration, which involves both conflict and collaboration and centers around the fluctuating play of power, creates fear for the public. In a sense, public fears may not be primarily directed at the products of biotechnology but the loss of collective grasp on the governance of science and of everyday products. Public participation, access to information regarding PNTs and other patented life science products, and the opportunity to form knowledge independently and outside of the narrowly defined set of legitimate criteria established by biotechnology 'players' is essential to the health of the public sphere.

Advanced liberal societies face the challenge of rendering visible 'knowledge economies' marked by intangibles

and the dominance of virtual forms of property and value. Justice within these 'knowledge societies; demands that these criteria of governance are met. This must be done to ensure the continued relevance of not only 'the public' but the political sphere to governance. This requires information flows across the current frontiers of the biotech figuration. Without access, independence and participation, publics remain merely consumers, lockedout of a regulatory and political relationship to production. However, the biotechnology regulatory figuration makes governing, explaining and identifying the regulatory process difficult, if not impossible. In sum, the biotechnology regulatory figuration must become a regulatory aid, not a regulatory problem for Canadians.

Endnotes

1. The sector is dominated by multinational research firms which have also forged transnational alliances to vertically integrate the biotechnology production with industrial supply chains. And in the case of commercial food markets, 'food clusters' have boasted that they 'will control the passage of food from soil to supper' (Holliday 1999:4; Economist 2000:6). 'Offshoring' of heavily regulated or prohibited biotechnologies, research practices or stages in the supply chain make it difficult to make meaningful regulation (see also Newell 2002; Scoones 2002).

2. Funded by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

3. Independent in the sense of not being employed either by a developer (such as a biotech firm) or a regulatory body (the Federal Government of Canada)

4. The skills required to regulate PNTs and insight into the commercial opportunities of plant genetics is best gained in industry labs. The lack of public sector employees with such skills has meant that 'the regulators' are largely drawn from the industry. The government departments involved have relied on industry working-groups to develop regulatory procedures - a process that the industry has seen as also a means to competitive advantage within the jurisdiction. Miller also found that participation in creating regulatory procedures which match a firm's existing laboratory protocols and equipment can be a way of imposing costs of compliance on lesser competitors (Miller 1999).

5. This distinction is important because it marks the growing importance of a set of non-actual but nevertheless real objects such as genetic sequences or other intellectual property that are now the focus of regulation and are the form of property which is at stake in biotechnology. The regulatory understanding of PNTs is not a matter of 'seeds' or of 'crops' per se but is described in terms of their traits - or virtues, to borrow a term from the lexicon of more ancient virtualities—functionalities, and their genetic code. These are virtualities, equally as real as the seeds and plants which are their corresponding actualization (see Shields 2003:Ch. 1-2). However, they are intangible objects. Rather than 'genes', effort focuses on genomes which are informational entitites consisting of code and worked on primarily as information sets not as chemicals or any physical elements.

6. At times the regulators may work collaboratively and be dependent on each other, but at other times they may work independently. Lab and field-trial evaluation procedures are fixed and highly codified but linked together by more fluid lines of interpretation, justification and shared beliefs in the appropriateness of statistical extrapolations from the small-scale of controlled tests to the larger scale and complexity of populations and environments.

7. Many appeals to recent discussions of 'social capital' as a way of understanding the social interactions described so far. However, the implications of the fluidity discussed about are that 'social capital' may not be a normative social context within which individuals are 'embedded' (Bourdieu 1982; Brown and Lauder 2000:227). It can be an unstable and intangible or 'virtual' entity itself: social capital can quickly lose its value as social currency. We are thus critical of theories of social capital in the sense of structural, cognitive (intellectual capital) and relational networks. These are also 'black boxes' that gloss over and rationalize the fluidity of such social worlds. Appeals to social capital beg the question by masking sociological aspects such as power, inequality, status, charisma and authority at the same time as it is often summoned to support theories of organization and innovation (eg. Brown and Lauder 2000:237; see also Mutch 2003).

8. Denying the social leads to an objectified but static and impotent understanding of the informational dynamics of the regulatory process (Taborsky 2001). This also emerges in the way in which knowledge as a social attribute of individuals (Rasmus 1999:2) and information as an object are elided within the regulatory space (Shields and Taborsky 2001).

9. This isotopy of the field is a specific quality of the figurational theory that is not well captured by either the 'Actor Network' literature nor recent attempts to go beyond it by introducing more fluid metaphors in the analysis of networks (Law and Hassard 1999).

10. For a statistical model to analyze the risks and trust involved in transported GM and non GM grains, see: "Costs and Risks of Testing and Segregating GM Wheat": 2002.

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Soft Surveillance: A Growth of Mandatory Volunteerism in Collecting Personal Information — "Hey Buddy Can You Spare a DNA?"

G.T. Marx

"Never underestimate the willingness of the American public to tell you about itself."
—Direct Marketing Executive

In Truro, Mass. at the end of 2004 police politely asked all male residents to provide a DNA sample to match with DNA material found at the scene of an unsolved murder. Residents were approached in a nonthreatening manner (even as their license plate numbers were recorded) and asked to help solve the crime. This tactic of rounding up all the usual suspects (and then some) is still rare in the United States for historical, legal and logistical reasons, but it is becoming more common. The Truro case illustrates expanding trends in surveillance and social control [1].

There is increased reliance on "soft" means for collecting personal information. In criminal justice contexts these means involve some or all of the following: persuasion to gain voluntary compliance, universality, or at least increased inclusiveness in the dragnet they cast, and emphasis on the needs of the community relative to the rights of the individual.

As with other new forms of surveillance and detection, the process of gathering the DNA information is quick and painless involving a mouth swab and is generally not felt to be invasive. This makes such requests seem harmless relative to the experience of having blood drawn, having an observer watch while a urine drug sample is produced, or being patted down or undergoing a more probing physical search.

In contrast, more traditional police methods such as an arrest, a custodial interrogation, a search, a subpoena or traffic stop are "hard". They involve coercion and threat in seeking involuntary compliance. They may also involve a crossing of intimate personal borders, as with a strip or body cavity search done by another. In principle such means are exclusive in being restricted by law and policy to persons there are reasons to suspect-thus implicitly recognizing the liberty of the individual relative to the needs of the community.

Yet the culture and practice of social control is changing. While hard forms of control are hardly receding, the soft forms are expanding in a variety of ways. I note several forms of this - requesting volunteers based on appeals to good citizenship or patriotism; using disingenuous communication; the trading of personal information for rewards and convenience; and utilizing hidden or low visibility information collection techniques.

The theme of volunteering as good citizenship or patriotism can increasingly be seen in other contexts. Consider a Justice Department "Watch Your Car" program found in many states. Decals which car owners place on their vehicles serve as an invitation to police anywhere in the United States to stop the car if driven late at night. Taxicabs in some cities beyond transmitting video images, also invite police to stop and search them without cause—presumably such searches extend to passengers as well who see the notice and choose to enter the cab.

There also appears to be an increase in Federal prosecutors asking corporations under investigation to waive

their attorney client privilege. This can provide information that is not otherwise available, if at a cost of indicting only lower level personnel. Plea bargaining shares a similar logic of coercive "volunteering" often hidden under a judicially sanctified and sanitized veneer of disguised coercion.

Another form involves disingenuous communication that seeks to create the impression that one is volunteering when that really isn't the case.

- the ubiquitous building signs, "In entering here you have agreed to be searched."
- a message from the Social Security Administration to potential recipients, "while it is voluntary for you to furnish this information, we may not be able to pay benefits to your spouse unless you give us the information."
- a Canadian airport announcement: "Notice: Security measures are being taken to observe and inspect persons. No passengers are obliged to submit to a search of persons or goods if they choose not to board our aircraft."

The New York subway system has supplemented the random searches of officers with automated searching by sensing machines. Potential riders need not submit, but then they may not use the subway.

Private Sector Parallels

The soft surveillance trend involves corporations more than government. Note the implicit bargain seen with respect to technologies of consumption in which the collection of personally identifiable (and often subsequently marketed) information is built into the very activity. We gladly, if often barely consciously, give up this information in return for the ease of buying and communicating and the seductions of frequent flyer and other reward programs. Information collection is unseen and automated (in a favored engineering goal "the human is out of the loop")[2]. It is "naturally" folded into routine activities such as driving a car or using a credit card, computer or telephone. Such information is then used in profiling, social sorting and risk assessment (Lyons 2002).

Consider also those who agree to report their consumption behavior and attitudes in more detail as part of market research. A new variant goes beyond the traditional paid "volunteers" of the Nielsen ratings and other consumer research. Volunteers are given free samples and talking points. They seek to create "buzz" about new products without revealing their connection to the sponsoring business. Procter and Gamble for example has 240,000 volunteers in its teenage product propaganda/diffusion network. While many call, few are chosen (10-15%) for this highly coveted role. (Walker 2004). These volunteer intelligence and marketing agents report on their own and others' responses to products, take surveys and participate in focus groups.

What is at stake here isn't merely improved advertising in intensively competitive industries but a new morally ambiguous form of tattling. Regardless of whether they are materially or status compensated, the providers of information to marketing research, are also volunteering information on those who share their characteristics and experiences [3]. However no permission and no direct benefits flow to the mass of persons the sponsoring agency learns about. There are parallels to DNA analysis here: an individual who voluntarily offers his or her information for analysis, also simultaneously offers information on family members who have not agreed to this [4]. We lack an adequate conceptual, ethical and legal framework for considering this spillover effect from voluntary to involuntary disclosure involving third parties.

Beyond differences between those who volunteer only on themselves or on themselves and others, we see those who only offer information on others. Another prominent form of volunteerism involves citizens watching each other as adjuncts to law enforcement. Beyond the traditional Neighborhood Watch programs, we can note new post9/11 forms such as a police sponsored C.A.T. EYES (Community Anti-Terrorism Training Initiative) [5]. Additionally, other programs encouraging truckers, utility workers, taxi drivers and delivery persons report suspicious activity.

It is easier to agree to the offering of personal information when the data collection process is automatic and hassle-free. Let us further consider the role of technology in potentially bypassing the need even to ask for consent or to offer rewards.

If You Don't Have to Undress Are You Still Naked? Searching Made Easy

Many forms of voluntarism are encouraged by techniques designed to be less directly invasive. Computers scan

dispersed personal records for suspicious cases, avoiding, at least initially, any direct review by a human. Similarly x-ray and scent machines "search" persons and goods for contraband without touching them. Inkless fingerprints can be taken without the stained thumb symbolic of the arrested person. Classified government programs are said to permit the remote reading of computers and their transmissions without the need to directly install a bugging device.

Beyond the ease of gathering DNA, consider the change from a urine drug test requiring an observer, to drug tests that require a strand of hair, sweat or saliva. Saliva is particularly interesting.

Whatever can be revealed from the analysis of blood or urine is also potentially found (although in smaller quantities) in saliva -not only evidence of disease and DNA, but also of drugs taken and pregnancy. This may also be the case for human odor. The recent development of nonelectrical sensors now make it possible to detect molecules at minute levels in saliva (New York Times, April 19, 2005).

Saliva testing is likely to offer a wonderful illustration of the creeping (or better galloping) expansion of personal data collection increasingly made possible by new (or less) non-invasive means [6]. Surveillance creep (Marx 2005) involves both the displacement of traditional invasive means and the expansion to new areas and users. To take blood, the body's protective armor must be pierced. But expectorating occurs easily and frequently and is more "natural" than puncturing a vein. Nor does it involve the unwanted observation required for a urine drug sample. Saliva samples can be easily and endlessly taken, and the changes charted make possible the early identification of problems.

This may offer medical diagnostic advantages to individuals who can maintain control over the content of their spit. Yet employers concerned with rising health costs, resistance to urine drug tests and avoiding liability for the illnesses of those who work around hazardous chemicals [7] would also have a strong interest in diagnostic spitting as a condition of employment. Public decorum authorities concerned with identifying those who spit when not requested to can also use the technology [8].

In many of these cases citizens are at least informed of what is going on, even if the meaning of their consent is often open to question. More troubling is the development of tactics that need not rely on the subject consenting, or even being informed, let alone receiving carrots or avoiding sticks in agreeing to cooperate. New hidden or low visibility technologies increasingly offer the tempting possibility of bypassing awareness, and thus any need for direct consent or other oversight, altogether.

New technologies overcome traditional barriers such as darkness or walls. Night vision technology illuminates what darkness traditionally protected (and the technology is itself protected, unlike an illuminated spotlight). Thermal imaging technology applied from outside can offer a rough picture of a building's interior based on heat patterns. There is no need for an observer to enter the space. NSA's satellites engage in warrantless remote monitoring of electronic communication to, or from the United States.

A person's DNA can be collected from a drinking glass or from discarded dental floss. Facial scanning technology only requires a tiny lens. Smart machines can "smell" contraband eliminating the need for a warrant or asking the sniffed for permission to invade their olfactory space or "see" through their clothes and luggage. Research is also being done with the goal of using human odor to identify specific persons, illness (both mental and physical) and even early pregnancy [9].

A vacuum like device is also available that can draw the breath away from a person suspected of drunk driving without the need to ask permission.

Beyond the traditional reading of visual clues offered by facial expression, there are claims that the covert analysis of heat patterns around the eyes and of tremors in the voice and measuring brain wave patterns offer windows into feelings and truth telling [10].

The face still remains a tool for protecting inner feelings and thoughts, but for how long? Different issues are raised by recent improvements in the technology of face transplanting.

Individuals need not be informed that their communication devices, vehicles, wallet cards and consumer items increasingly will have RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) chips embedded in them. These can be designed to be passively read from up to 30 feet away by unseen sensors [11].In the convoluted logic of those who justify covert (or non-informed) data collection and use, individuals "volunteer" their data by walking or driving on public streets, entering a shopping mall and by failing to hide their faces, wear gloves and encrypt their communication, or by choosing to use a phone, computer or a credit card. The statement of a direct marketer nicely illustrates this: "never ever underestimate the willingness of the American public to tell you about itself. That data belongs to us!..It isn't out there because we stole it from them. Someone gave it away and now it's out there for us to use."

Yes, But…

In an environment of intense concern about crime and terrorism and a legal framework generated in a far simpler time, the developments discussed above are hardly surprising. Democratic governments need to be reasonably effective and to maintain their legitimacy (even as research on the complex relationships between effectiveness, and legitimacy is needed). Working together and sacrificing a bit of oneself for the common good, particularly in times of crisis, is hardly controversial. Relative to traditional authoritarian settings, many of the above examples show respect for the person in offering notice and some degree of choice and in minimizing invasiveness [12]. Such efforts draw on the higher civic traditions of democratic participation, self-help, and community. They may also deter. Yet there is something troubling about them.

The accompanying rhetoric is often dishonest and even insulting to one's intelligence. Consider a phone company executive who, in defense of unblockable Caller-ID, said, "when you choose to make a phone call you are choosing to release your telephone number". In the same World Cup League of Disingenuity is the statement of a personnel manager in a one-industry town, "we don't require anyone to take a drug test, only those who choose to work here."

To be a meaningful choice should imply genuine alternatives and refusal costs that are not wildly exorbitant. Absent that we have trickery, double-talk and the frequently spoiled fruit of inequitable relationships.

When we are told that for the good of the community we must voluntarily submit to searches, there is a danger of the tyranny of the communal and of turning presumptions of innocence upside down. If only the guilty need worry, why bother with a Bill of Rights and other limits on authority? There also comes a point beyond which social pressure seems unreasonable [13].

If the case for categorical information is strong, then the rules ought to require it [14]. without need of the verbal jujitsu of asking for volunteers, or implying that the subject is in fact taking voluntary action in the full meaning of the term, when failure to comply has serious consequences, such as being denied a job, a benefit or appearing suspect in other's eyes.

Those who fail to volunteer can be viewed as having something to hide, or as being bad citizens and uncooperative team players. The positive reasons for rejecting such requests are ignored. Yet we all have things to legitimately hide, or more properly to selectively reveal, depending on the relationship and context. The general social value we place on sealed first class letters, window blinds and bathroom doors and our opposition to indiscriminant wiretapping, bugging and informing, or in giving up anonymity in public places (absent cause) are hardly driven by an interest to aid the guilty. Sealing juvenile criminal records does not reflect a perverse strategy for infiltrating miscreants into adult life, but rather understanding of, and some compassion for, the mistakes of youth.

We value privacy not to protect wrongdoing, but because an appropriate degree of control over personal and social information is central to our sense of self, autonomy and material well being, --as well as being necessary for independent group actions. A healthy, if necessarily qualified, suspicion of authority is also a factor in restricting information sought by the more powerful. As consumers and citizens we have an interest in avoiding the manipulation, discrimination, inappropriate social sorting and theft that can flow from combining bits of personal information which are innocuous by themselves.

Many of the new controls may seem more acceptable (or at least are less likely to be challenged) because they are hidden or built-in, less invasive relative to the traditional forms of crossing personal and physical borders. We are often complicit in their application-whether out of fear, convenience or for frequent shopper awards. Converting privacy to a commodity in which the seller receives something in return to compensate for the invasion is a clever and more defensible means of overcoming resistance.

Exchanges and less invasive searches are certainly preferable to data rip-offs and more invasive searches [15].

However, the nature of the means should not be determinative. The appropriateness of collecting the information is also important. A search is still a search regardless of how it is carried out. The issue of searches and the crossing of traditional borders between the civil and state sectors, or the self and others, involves much more than painless, quick, inexpensive and non-embarrassing means, or of "volunteering" to avoid suspicion or opportunity denial.

Other factors being equal, soft ways are to be preferred to hard, even if the control/instrumental goals of those applying the surveillance remain the same. Yet coercion at least has the virtue, (if that's what it is), of letting the subject (or object) know what is happening and the possibility of offering resistance. What we don't know can hurt us as well.

One of the most troubling aspects of recent changes is that they so often occur beneath the radar of public

awareness and input. Consider technological designs thrust upon us by industrial fiat such as Caller-ID (initially offered with no blocking options).

Unhappy Underlaps

Traditionally (if accidentally) there was a happy overlap between three factors that limited searches and protected personal information. The first was logistical. It was not cost- or time-effective to search everyone. The second was law. More invasive searches were prohibited or inadmissible, absent cause and a warrant. The third reflected the effrontery experienced in our culture when certain personal borders were involuntarily crossed (e.g., strip and body cavity searches and taking body fluids, and to a lesser degree, even fingerprinting) [16].

Limited resources, the unpleasantness of invasive searches (for both the searched and the searcher) and the ethos of a democratic society historically restricted searches.

These supports are being undermined by the mass media's encouragement of fear and perceptions of crises, the seductiveness of consumption [17].

Also, the concurrent development of inexpensive, less invasive tools for broad searching. Under these conditions one does not need a meteorologist to describe wind patterns.

The willingness to offer personal information and the fascination with the private aspects of other's lives is a partial legacy of the 1960s openness and transparency as it encounters the possibilities offered by the last decade's technologies. But it also speaks to some need of the modern person (and perhaps in particular the American) to see and to be seen and to know and to be known about through the ubiquitous camera and related means.

Here we see changes in a cultural strand involving the willing, even gleeful public exposure of private information—whether in dress styles, cell phone conversations or the mass media. Many Americans are drawn to new communications technologies like nails to a magnet, unable to resist the prurient call to watch others, but also with a near Dostoyevskian compulsion to offer information on themselves.

There can be psychological gratifications from revelation for both the voluntary revealer and the recipient of the information. This mutuality makes the topic interesting and complicated and works against a reductionist argument that knowledge always reflects the interests of those with the technology to discover.

With some revelation we see the truth in Janice Joplin's assertion that, "freedom's just another word for nothing left to lose." Voluntarily offered secret information may lose its value in the sunshine. Consider the freedom from the threat of blackmail that accompanies an individual going public with a secret, such as homosexuality and extra-marital affairs. One strand of feminism views exposure of the female body and the assertion of sexuality as willful acts that, in their naturalness, demystifies and turns the viewed person into an active agent, rather than the subject or object of the actions of others.

The prying and often inane TV talk and reality shows, web cam pages, web blogs, the goofy waving of fans at televised events and videotaping conception, birth and last wills and testaments suggest the extent to which we have become both a performance and a spectator society -literally from the beginning of life to the end.

Volunteering one's data and being digitally recorded and tracked is coming to be taken for granted as a means of asserting selfhood. This willful blurring of some of the lines between the public and private self and the ready availability of technologies to transmit and receive personal data give new meaning to David Riesman's concern with other direction.

Of course our sense of self and social participation have always depended on validation from others—on seeing ourselves in, and through, their eyes. But contemporary outlets for this are prone to induce a sense of pseudoauthenticity, an unbecoming narcissism and a suspicious spy culture. The social functions of reticence and embarrassment and the role of withheld personal information as a currency of trust, friendship, and intimacy are greatly weakened.

The abundance of new opportunities for self-expression offered by contemporary technologies must be considered alongside of the lessened control we have over information and models in distant computer systems. Data shadows or ghosts based on tangents of personal information (stripped of context) increasingly affect life chances. The subject often has little knowledge of the existence or consequences of these data bases and of how their identity is constructed or might be challenged.

This complicated issue of reducing the richness of personal and social contexts to a limited number of variables

is at the core of the ability of science to predict and generalize. It is central to current ideas about economic competitiveness and risk management. The data analyst goes from known empirical cases to equivalent cases which are not directly known. Because a given case can be classified relative to a statistical model as involving a high or low risk, it is presumed to be understood and thus controllable (at least on a statistical or "probabilistic" bases). This may work fine for business or medical decisions, but civil liberties and civil rights are not based on statistical categories. They are presumed to be universally applicable absent cause to deny them. So rationality and efficiency as ways of doing societal business increasingly clash with many of our basic Enlightenment ideas of individualism and dignity -ideas which were better articulated, and less contestable, in technologically simpler times.

In the face of grave risks and the blurring of lines between the foreign and domestic, today's security issues are more complicated, but still involve the question of where control agents should look (both morally and practically) to discover or prevent harm and how their behavior should be reviewed. A central idea in the Bill of Rights and in the general culture is that there be reasonable grounds on which to investigate, absent that individuals should be "let alone" as Warren and Brandeis (1890) argued. Of course just what being left alone means is contentious, especially when searches are done directly by machines rather than people.

Searches in the eighteenth century had a cruder physical quality and the object of a search was something material - whether contraband or printed material. Today, networks, electronic transactions and communication and behavior patterns that are more publicly accessible than papers hidden in a drawer, are of search interest. New data mining techniques (such as those proposed for the Total Information Awareness program, CAPPS2 for airline passengers or NSA's satellite screening of communications) depend on dragnets (both with respect to kinds of data and persons) of staggering breadth. There is an initial superficial troll in the hope of finding cases for more detailed investigation. The traditional standard is less easily applied to the initial automated search.

There is a chilling and endless regress quality in our drift into a society where you have to provide ever more personal information in order to prove that you are the kind of person who does not merit even more intensive scrutiny. Here we confront the insatiable information appetite generated by scientific knowledge in a risk-adverse society. In such a society knowing more may only serve to increase doubt and the need for more information.

Things that are "voluntarily" turned over to third parties such as garbage or dialed telephone numbers, along with what "a person knowingly exposes to the public, even in his own home or office" such as a voice sample, handwriting, fingerprint or facial appearance are generally beyond the search restrictions of the Fourth Amendment. Efforts to protect these (e.g., by shredding garbage or putting it in a sealed container), which clearly indicate an expectation of privacy, are not sufficient to legally guarantee it. Their exposure to "public" (defined as others, rather than as a particular place) brings the risk of revelation or discovery [18]. A central issue is of course what "exposure" means in an age of sense-enhancing (and often covertly and remotely applied) surveillance devices, which may, or may not, be widely known about or in common use. The two criteria of reasonablness offered by the landmark Katz case --the expectation of privacy as socially reasonable and the individual's expectations (which can be inferred from whether or not the individual takes actions to protect privacy, as well as from what the individual is aware of) are often at variance.

However my concern here is more with less visible cultural and behavioral developments than with the law. Certainly we do not lack for contemporary examples of constricted or trampled legal rights (e.g., American citizens held at Guantanamo without trial or the unwelcome elements of the Patriot Act). The Fourth Amendment is not what it was following the decisions of the Warren Court, particularly with respect to the exclusionary rule [19]. However it is still very far from what it was at the end of the eighteenth century. The overall pattern of the greater institutionalization of civil rights and civil liberties over the last century (whether involving race, gender, children, work, freedom of expression and association or searches and life styles) is unlikely to be reversed. Jagged cycles rather than clean linearity will continue to characterize this turbulent history. The maximally unconstitutional Alien and Sedition Acts have not returned. Wartime restrictions (whether Lincoln's suspending of habeas corpus or limits on speech during WW II) have been lifted as calmer times reappeared. To be sure the evidence of ebbs is undeniable, but relative to the period immediately after 9/11, there are some flows as well [20]. Power differentials can of course be enhanced by recent technical developments. However, for the questions considered in this article the centralizing power implications are more mixed [21]. Certainly the more privileged have greater say in what technologies are developed and greater access to them, as well to means to thwart them. Just because all persons radiate accessible data does not mean that data receptors are unaffected by social stratification. On balance, technical innovations are more likely to bolster, than to undermine, the established order. The developments I note can disguise a substratum of power, coercion and inequality.

Yet some counter points to an unqualifiedly hegemonic perspective can also be noted. These developments suggest a paradoxical view in which the technology's sponge-like absorbency is joined by its laser-like specificity -permitting both mass (nondifferentiated) and individual (highly differentiated) targeting. Data mining nicely illustrates this.

Universalistic or categorical (dragnet) requests for personal information have an egalitarian, rather than an individualizing and differentiating quality. The camera lens catches all within its province regardless of social characteristics (although the distribution of lens can hardly be said to be socially neutral).

The trade of personal information for consumer benefits better characterizes the more, rather than the less, privileged social groups. In addition, as with the Rodney King and related cases, widely available, low visibility techniques (e.g., video, audio and audit trails) can also be used against the more powerful.

Yet the cultural changes noted are worrisome because they are diffuse, subtle and unseen - and they often reflect choices that, even if specious or manipulated, are difficult to challenge in a democratic society. The possibility of wrongful choice is an inherent risk of democracy.

One's liberty can be used to smoke, eat rich foods, drive environmentally unfriendly cars and watch unreality television, as well as to volunteer personal information -whether to government or the commercial sector [22].

A bad law can be challenged in court or repealed. A dangerous technology can be banned, regulated or challenged with a counter-technology. But the only way to respond to liberty-threatening choices of the kind discussed here is through dialogue and education (tools that are already disproportionately available to those supporting the current developments).

Is it Happening Here?

Contrary to the familiar Orwellian concerns about the all knowing eyes and ears of government, recent history suggests to some observers the reverse problem-blindness, deafness, and inefficiency (e.g., the 9/11 danger known only in retrospect or the inability of 500,000 cameras in London to prevent the transit bombings; the failure of various airline passenger screening programs; wrongful convictions and the problems of some crime labs, the weakness of facial recognition technology in natural settings and so on). In one sense there are two problems with the new surveillance technologies. One is that they don't work and the other is that they work too well. If the first, they fail to prevent disasters, bring miscarriages of justice, and waste resources. If the second they can further inequality and invidious social categorization and chill liberty. These twin threats are part of the enduring paradox of democratic government which must be strong enough to maintain reasonable order, but not so strong as to become undemocratic.

The surveillance developments noted here are consistent with the strengthening of the neoliberal ethos of the last decade. In what might be called the "only you" theory of social control, individuals are encouraged to protect themselves and those close to them, because government can't (or won't).

The individualized strategies seen with the offering of one's own information, and information on others, grows out of noble traditions of volunteerism and individual responsibility that are central to self and social control in a democracy. Yet private solutions for social, economic and political problems can be taken too far.

The idea of voluntary compliance and self-help valorizes increased individual choices, costs and risks. It simultaneously weakens many social protections and programs and pays less attention to the ways the social order may produce bad choices and collective problems. The consequences of these are then left to individual and private solutions [23].

This generates a suspicious society in which paranoia is entangled with reality. This emphasis can further social neglect and subsequent problems, leading to calls for more intensive and extensive surveillance, citizen cooperation and privatization in social control.

There is no single answer to how the new personal information collection techniques ought to be viewed and what, if anything, should (or can) be done about them. From genuine to mandatory (or coerced or seduced) voluntarism and from open to secret data collection-these are points on continuums. We can differentiate information that is secret or unknown because an individual has discretionary control over revelation (e.g., regarding life styles, consumption, finances, religious and political beliefs) from that which is not revealed because a sense enhancing technology is lacking to reveal it (e.g., traditionally being unseen in the dark or from miles away).

There are important moral differences between what can be known through the unaided senses and what can only be known through technologically enhanced senses. The moral and practical issues around the initial collection of information are distinct from its subsequent uses and protections. Diverse settings --national security, domestic law enforcement, public order maintenance, health and welfare, commerce, banking, insurance, public and private spaces and roles do not call for the rigid application of the same policies.

The different roles of employer-employee, merchant-consumer, landlord-renter, police-suspect and health provider-patient involve some legitimate conflicting interests. Any practice is also likely to involve some conflict in values. Thus categorical pre-screening of everyone, as against only those there is a specific reason to screen is fair. Yet it can violate other cultural standards.

We need a situational or contextual perspective that acknowledges the richness of different contexts, as well as the multiplicity of conflicting values within and across them [24].

In the face of the simplistic rhetoric of polarized ideologues in dangerous times, we need attention to trade offs and to the appropriate weighing of conflicting values. Given changing historical circumstances, there is no fixed golden balance point. However the procedures for accountability and oversight so central to the founding and endurance of the country need to be strengthened, not weakened or ignored. Contemporary moral-panic efforts to erode these must to be strenuously resisted.

With respect to contemporary search questions those who would further unleash surveillance engage in high order mendacity when they attack critics for being against the goal of security, or against discovery behavior per se. Tough times may call for extreme measures. The real issue is one of procedure and accountability. The need for more invasive methods must be met with a corresponding increase in oversight and review. Today these too often are moving in opposite directions [25].

We need to better define the meaning of "search". Absent that we continue the drift toward blurring the lines between superficial and more probing searches and applying standards that may be appropriate for the former to the latter.

It would be foolish to elevate transparency and consent to absolutes, but neither should we continue to slide into a world where meaningful consent is only of historical interest. At best we can hope to find a compass rather than a map and a moving equilibrium rather than a fixed point for decision making. Yet we need to rethink just what consent means when it is possible to so easily evade or manipulate it. What is an individual consenting to in "being" in public and in not shielding information that might be available to hidden technologies?

Appreciating complexity is surely a virtue, but being immobilized by it is not. The default position should be meaningful consent, absent strong grounds for avoiding it. Consent involves participants who are fully appraised of the surveillance system's presence and potential risks, and of the conditions under which it operates [26].

Consent obtained through deception, unreasonable or exploitative seduction, or to avoid dire consequences is hardly consent. The smile that accompanies the statement, "an offer you can't refuse" reflects that understanding.

We need a principle of truth in volunteering: it is far better to say clearly that "as a condition of [entering here, working here, receiving this benefit…] we require that you provide personal information". A golden rule principle ought also to apply -would the information collector be comfortable in being the subject, rather than the agent of surveillance, if the situation were reversed [27]?

We need to overcome the polite cultural tendency to acquiesce when we are inappropriately asked for personal information. We need to just say "no"-when, after paying with a credit card, a cashier asks for a phone number, or when a web page or warranty form asks for irrelevant personal information, or a video store seeks a social security number. Offering disinformation may sometimes be appropriate. The junk mail I receive for Groucho and Karl offers a laugh, and a means of tracking the erroneous information I sometimes provide to inappropriate requests.

Finally, technology needs to be seen as an opportunity, rather than only as a problem. Technologies can be designed to do a better job of protecting personal information and notifying individuals when their information is being collected or has been compromised. Video monitoring systems can be designed to block out faces as their default position and X-ray and T-ray systems can be programmed to block anatomical details [28].

E-ZPass toll collection systems can be programmed to deduct payment, while protecting the anonymity of the driver. RFID technology can build notification in by requiring that the chip make physical contact with the sensor (e.g., touching the card or item to the sensor), rather than permitting it to be read covertly at a distance. Cell phones cameras could be designed to emit a tell tale sound before a picture is taken (this is required in Japan). Electronic silencers can inhibit third parties from overhearing cell phone and face-to face-conversations and computer privacy screens can block sneaky peeks by anyone not directly in front of the screen.

From one perspective using technology to protect one's personal information may offer legal support for an expectation of privacy. In Kyllo v. United States, a case involving the legality of a search warrant based on evidence from thermal imaging technology, the dissenting judges argued that because the suspect did not take any actions to block the heat emissions that passed through his roof from his marijuana grow lights, he did not have an expectation of privacy. There thus is no Fourth Amendment issue and the police action should not require a warrant [29].

From this sorely misguided perspective what can be routinely done determines appropriateness. Once a technology becomes widely available and is well known, responsibility for protection shifts legally (as well as practically) to the individual, not to those who would cross personal borders. In failing to act in response to changed technical circumstances beyond his or her control, the individual is seen to be making a choice and in a sense again volunteers to be searched and to accept whatever risks may be involved.

However, the goals and consequences of the technique need to be considered independently of any actions taken (or not taken) by the subject. Greater responsibility must be placed on those with the search tools as is the case in Europe. There the emphasis is on the general principle of respect for the dignity of the person as means of privacy protection. (Whitman 2004) [30]. This calls attention to the consequences of the actions of the search agent, rather than to the risks and rewards the subject is willing to accept. With respect to surveillance questions, market mechanisms involving choice, whatever their instrumental advantages, are less relied upon in much of Europe.

This also offers a general protective principle regardless of what new technologies are developed. As a result the appearance of new snooping technologies is generally less controversial in Europe, where they are in a sense still-born with restrictions. In the United States new technologies tend to be born enabled and any restrictive policies must be sought anew for each technique (e.g., caller-Id, drug-tests, video cameras).

In the United States a "blame the victim" caveat subjectus logic cries out for a cartoon entitled, "where will it end?" Beyond the paper shredder which has become routine in many homes [31]. The cartoon would show a citizen driven to protect privacy by always wearing gloves, a mask and perfume; and [32] having a closely shaved head; talking in code and encrypting all communications; insulating home, office and packages in thermal image resistant tin foil and only using restrooms certified to be monitoring free.

One way to think about the topic is to note that many of the kinds of surveillance once found only in high security military and prison settings are seeping into the society at large. Are we moving toward becoming a maximum security society where ever more of our behavior is known and subject to control?

Some features of the maximum security society are: 1) a "sensed" (and perhaps censored) society based on ubiquitous and ambient sensors softly, invisibly, effortlessly and continually gathering behavioral, locational, communication and physiological data 2) a transparent society, in which the boundaries of time, distance, darkness, and physical barriers that traditionally protected information are weakened and pierced 3) a dossier society in which computerized records play a major role 4) a networked society in which diverse kinds of previously unavailable (or if available, disaggregated) personal data are woven together in an ever finer mesh 5) an actuarial and risk-adverse society in which decisions are increasingly made using such data for predictions about future behavior as a result of membership in, and comparisons to, aggregate statistical categories 6) a suspicious society in which every one is assumed to be a possible subject of interest 7) a self-monitored society, in which auto-surveillance under the constant uncertainty of discovery plays a prominent role 8) an engineered society in which choices are increasingly limited and determined by manipulating physical and social environments.

In hopefully writing an imprescient novel, Sinclair Lewis in 1935 suggested It Can't Happen Here. But of course it can, and in some ways it has. In a book on undercover police practices I considered the softening of social control in other forms beyond those discussed here [33].

In concluding that book two decades ago I wrote,

> The first task of a society that would have liberty and privacy is to guard against the misuse of physical coercion by the state and private parties. The second task is to guard against the softer forms of secret and manipulative control. Because these are often subtle, indirect, invisible, diffuse and deceptive and shrouded in benign justifications, this is clearly the more difficult task (Marx 1988).

In 2006 the hot button cultural themes of threat, civil order and security that Lewis emphasized are in greater ascendance and have been joined by the siren calls of consumption. If our traditional notions of liberty disappear it will not be because of a sudden coup d'etat. Nor will the iron technologies of industrialization be the central means. Rather it will occur by accretion and with an appeal to traditional American values in a Teflon and sugar-coated technological context of low visibility, fear and convenience.

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Endnotes

1. In a criminal justice context the dragnet method illustrates some classic issues such as the tension between a standard of reasonable suspicion or probable cause and the need to solve high profile crimes; between a presumption of innocence and of guilt; and whether the government can be trusted when it promises to destroy the DNA collected, rather than to save it in a database. There is also the pragmatic question of whether or not it works and under what conditions and to what degree and for what purposes. For example, for varied outcomes such as the identification and location of the guilty for a given crime and for an unrelated crime; false positives and negatives; and finding nothing at all-it would be useful to contrast situations involving acquiescence to, or rejection of, voluntary requests; unsolicited volunteers; information provided as a result of a warrant; and situations in which individuals provide information under the mistaken belief that they have no choice.

A review of 20 recent instances found that in the overwhelming majority of cases DNA dragnets did not lead to success. In seven of the cases traditional investigation methods did. (Grand 2002; Chapin 2005; Electronic Privacy Information Center 2005; see also Walker 2005).

2. This is the techno-fallacy of autonomous technology in which the hand and the assumptions of the human designer are unacknowledged. In Marx (2003) I discuss 21 such fallacies associated with communication and surveillance technology.

3. Volunteer has two meanings here-first agreeing to act without external compulsion-a kind of free will or better, within cultural and resource limits, an independent willfulness with respect to action taken. This is often, but need not be, linked to a second meaning of acting without receiving material compensation. People who participate because they are paid of course may voluntarily agree to this, but their behavior is not voluntary in the way that those who participate without direct reward is. The volunteer marketers appear to "profit" from seeing themselves as insiders and as members of an elite consumer group being the first to know. A distinction can be drawn between an individual offering data that permits other members of his or her group to be better manipulated ala an understanding of their demographics and attitudes, with offering data which stigmatize. Group stigmatization for example can apply to ethnic groups shown by DNA to have a proclivity for some illnesses (Alpert 2003).

4. The appropriate response is not to ban the subject's willful seeking of the information, but to rigidly control use of the information as it might be applied (e.g., by insurance companies) to other persons to whom it refers, but who have not sought it.

5. The program seeks to give "the average person terrorist indicators to watch for, not race or religion" (http://web.mit.edu/gtmarx/www/www.cateyesprogram.com).

6. Invasive is a term easily thrown about in such discussions. Yet a variety of meanings can be unpacked. It can involve procedures in referring to degree of literal invasiveness via crossing a physical border of the person, here entries into natural body orifices such as ears contrast with breaking the skin to extract a bullet. It can refer to directionality-implanting in the body may have different connotations than extracting from it. It may refer to the nature of what is discovered (information on being left or right handed vs. religious and political beliefs). (Marx, forthcoming). The definition may depend on the kind of relationship between the parties (e.g., familial vs.formal organizational). The place a search occurs, apart from what is searched or found can also be a factor. Thus in the Kyllo case the majority held that a search of the home was inherently invasive because of where it occurred. Whether the search discovered heat emissions or contraceptives was irrelevant. The "where," not the "how" or "what" defined it.

> The above factors are empirical and in a sense objective. Invasiveness can also be considered with respect to definitions involving perception and feelings, beyond anything observable in a behavioral sense. Consider the meaning of being involuntarily watched for an exhibitionist, as against a person of reticent disposition, or the voyeur's interest in watching, as against the recluse's interest in avoiding input from others.

7. In such contexts the identification of early stage pregnant employees is of particular interest.

> The automated analysis of urine offers the same potential. A diagnostic test (routinely used in some Japanese employment contexts) requires that each time an employee enters the stall they be identified through their access card. This permits a comprehensive record of their flushed offerings over

time. It is said to be of great benefit in the earlier diagnosis of health problems. On the other hand ...

8. Consider for example the transit authority in Sheffield, England who, as part of an anti-spitting campaign distributed 3000 DNA swab kits to transportation staff. Posters proclaim "Spit It's Out" and warn persons who spit that "...you can be traced and prosecuted. Even if we don't know what you look like. And your record will be on the national DNA data base. Forever." For those of another era, this is reminiscent of the grammar school teachers who threatened to add notes about misbehavior to "your permanent record".

9. Here science may come to the defense of folk prejudices which hold that the "other" smells differently.

10. Reading brain wave patterns requires attaching sensors to the head and thus an informed subject. But should the remote reading of brain waves become possible and workable, science fiction would once again become science and another technological weakness that protected liberty would disappear. Ray Bradbury's heroes in Fahrenheit 451 who resisted a book burning, totalitarian regime by memorizing destroyed books would need to find alternative means.

While there is some overlap, compare the passive, low-visibility reading of personal information (whether brain waves, smells, or from a chip) that is involuntarily transmitted with the widespread use of air-sniffing radiation-detection devices aimed at places rather than persons.

11. The technology can require that the chip make physical contact with the sensor (e.g., requiring the card to touch it) or chip can be read remotely. This nicely illustrates how technical design can have social causes and consequences. When the chip must contact the reader the subject is of necessity aware, otherwise covert reading is possible by both the "official" reader and by an uninvited thief-lurker, although with current technology this is limited to about 30 feet. The greater the distance from the chip, the more power the reader needs and at some point this is great enough to fry the chip in the process of trying to read it. A rarely noted consequence of location technologies is their ability to identify social networks and patterns (e.g., other copresent individuals whose chips are also read and an analysis of the timing of passages).

Technologies can be contrasted by whether their application requires the subject's awareness and active or passive cooperation (or at least involvement). Compare truth determination via the traditional polygraph attached to the individual with reading of facial signals, or the analysis of word patterns. The Enron case partly relied on finding lying through the analysis of word use patterns in e-mails. Of course in the latter cases subjects can be informed that low visibility techniques are being used and consent can be requested. Even when there is no formal request for permission-as with being starred at, awareness may offer the possibility of deterring, challenging or avoiding the unwanted data collection. Visibility can make reciprocity an option.

12. In a government context requests for voluntary searching is legal as long as police do not, "convey a message that compliance with their requests is required" and refusal to volunteer can not be used against the person. (Florida v. Bostick 1991) Yet apart from their words, the official status, badge, weapon and demeanor of an officer may convey an alternative message. Efforts to deceptively create the impression that information must be legally provided would seem to violate the 5th Amendment.

13. Consider, for example, the politicians who release their drug test records and sworn statements attesting to their marital fidelity and who challenge their opponents to do the same. Since the court in Chandler v. Miller, 117 S.Ct. 1295, 1303 (1997) overturned a Georgia ruling permitting drug testing of those currently holding or seeking public office, this can no longer be legally required. Social pressure and a strategic response to such a challenge is, however, another matter.

14. There also needs to be limitations on secondary use. DNA collected for law enforcement purposes is interesting in that regard. It was initially claimed that the DNA collected could only be used for identification purposes. Subsequent technical developments then made it possible to read much more of the DNA from the small sample taken, offering a broad window into the individual's genetic makeup, a factor far transcending simple identification.

15. Here I imply the ideal situation in which individuals fully understand not only what they will be receiving, but what they are giving away, how it will be used and protected, potential risks and what secondary uses there might be.

In suggesting that less invasive means of searching are preferable, we need to be mindful that these come with the threat of vastly expanding the pool of those who are searched (and of course as the Texas judge reportedly said," if you hang them all you will certainly get the guilty"). Expanded nets and thinned meshes are a function of perceived threats and degrees of risk, as well as ease of application. The seemingly ever greater ease and efficiency offered by technological means are on a collision course with traditional liberty protecting ideas of reasonable suspicion and minimization and impracticality.

16. The issue with fingerprints, beyond the symbolism in their association with criminals and temporarily stained finger, is the absence of anonymity and the ability to link disparate records. As noted in a recent development the dirty finger smudge problem (and reminder) has been eliminated through an inkless system.

17. See for example recent studies by Glassner 2000.

Altheide 2002.

18. Major Supreme Court cases here are: trash-California v. Greenwood 1988 and United States v. Scott 1992; dialed telephone numbers-pen register data, Smith vs. Maryland 1979; voice sampling-United States v. Dinoisio 1973; handwriting sample-United States v. Mara 1973.

19. Dash (2004) offers a short history of the whittling down of the exclusionary rule.

20. Note pointed Congressional discussions on revising the Patriot Act, an explosion in state privacy laws, and the many local communities that passed resolutions in opposition to aspects of the Patriot Act. Of course in many ways the United States lags behind Europe, but the point is not only how far laws and policies are from the ideal, but that they are on the books and that they have a symbolic meaning and reaffirm values. In some of its actions (e.g., banking, fair credit reporting legislation, the 1986 Electronic Privacy Protection Act) the congress has implicitly legislated the ethos of the fourth amendment. Consider too, the consciousness raising aspects of recent legislation requiring companies that discover the electronic compromising of personal data to notify subjects and the "do not call lists".

21. Qualifications to the too easy linkage of power and surveillance are discussed in Marx (2005).

22. Of course there are limits such as on selling a kidney, selling one's self into slavery or waiving medical or legal liability. Recent HIPPA legislation does however permit waiving of a jury trial in the event a patient has a dispute with a medical provider.

23. Katz (2001) for example argues that the subjection of children to new surveillance tools (nanny and daycare cams, drug testing, electronic tracking and the like) is in response to the lack of adequate social provision for the needs of children and the creation of safer public environments.

24. There is also need to analyze what is meant by trade-offs, what the empirical evidence is for concluding trade-offs are in fact present and how focusing on one set of questions often means ignoring others (Monahan, forthcoming). We can also identify conditions under which privacy and security are supportive or at least congruent, for example appropriately applied, highly effective systems minimize false accusations and unnecessary searches and treating citizen's with respect can enhance legitimacy and cooperation with control agents.

25. Consider the monitoring of international communications of Americans by NSA without recourse (even on a delayed bases) to the warrant requirement of 1978 law and significant weakening of the Attorney Generals and local guidelines on intelligence gathering. N.Y. T. Dec.19, 2005. Notes also a decline from 200 million documents declassified in 1998 to 44 million in 2005 and a doubling to 15 million of the number of newly classified government documents. N.Y.T. Dec. 29, 2005.

26. The "opt-in" feature of some data base systems reflects this in using the information of persons who are informed and who consent.

27. These are related to 20 broad questions and related principles that I suggest (Marx 2005) be asked about any collection of personal information. These involve factors such as goal appropriateness, means-ends relationships, identifying and dealing with undesirable unintended consequences and reciprocity. In general the more the questions can be answered in a manner consistent with the underlying principles, the more legitimate the collection of personal information is.

> I prefer a contextual approach to the policy questions, rather than one that begins with a value that must always take precedence-whether this involves the rights of the individual or the needs of the community.

28. The latter would eliminate the need for same sex monitors with its assumptions of a homogeneity regarding the sexual orientation of the watched and the watcher.

29. In this reading such a search is legal according to the Supreme Court's test established in the 1967 Katz case. The majority of Justices however did not agree. On the other hand, the failure to take protective actions might also be seen to suggest that the individual expected the activity to remain private because he was unaware of high-tech means not yet widely used. He hence saw no need to take blocking actions. As with so much in the law, the line here is more like a cooked noodle rather than a re-bar.

30. The greater role of liberty as the most salient principle for protecting privacy in the United States (particularly from government) is also supportive of the citizen's right to volunteer personal information. It ironically also serves to legitimate the liberty claimed by private agents of surveillance, gun owners and purveyors of hate speech. A key issue is how liberty plays out for various kinds of actors.

31. Those not wanting to use a paper shredder might consider moving to Beverly Hills, California where it is illegal to rummage through other's garbage left on the street.

32. However research efforts are underway to overcome any distorting elements for human smell essence that perfume or eating garlic might disguise.

33. The means considered in this paper, along with other changes suggest a decline in the use of domestic coercion in many spheres. Thus consider the practical disappearance of whipping, flogging and public executions, lesser use of capital punishment, a decline in the homicide rate and of corporal punishment in

the home and schools and programs emphasizing antibullying and the development of discussion and negotiation skills. The development of nonlethal weapons might also fit here (but as with the softening of power more generally it may come with increased use and intervention-see note 15). Nonlethal weapons are sometimes lethal.

Robert Nisbet (1975) considers the softening of power in broader historical perspective as does Foucault (1977) from a different critical perspective. Richard Leo (1992) offers a case study of the move from coercion to deception in police interrogations as the third degree largely disappeared. One can also make distinctions between hard and soft control problematic. They may share the logic of bribery, which when pushed, can blur the borders between them. Thus how should we conceptualize compliance gained by the threat, but not the application, of coercion? Certainly this is hard, yet the absence of punishment or cost becomes a sort of reward, or at least an inducement. The carrot lies in avoiding the stick.

In another example of blurred borders, consider the expanding number of fast track programs which offer individuals the chance to give up personal information in return for preferential treatment, such as at airports or on toll roads. Here the potential stick of "long waits" is avoided for the carrot of "no wait", by submission to another stick-that of "volunteering" personal information.

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Pattern Recognition in Fast Capitalism: Calling Literary Time on the Theorists of Flux

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Introduction - Dealing with Speed: Flux Theories' Deterritorialization of the Subject

> The message of any medium or technology is the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs. (McLuhan [1964] 1995:8) [emphasis added]

> There are too many complaints about society having to move fast to keep up with the machine. There is a great advantage in moving fast if you move completely, if social, educational, and recreational changes keep pace. You must change the whole pattern at once and the whole group together—and the people themselves must decide to move. (Margaret Mead Time Magazine 1954 (McLuhan [1964] 1995:28)[emphasis added]

> Fully imagined cultural futures were the luxury of another day, one in which 'now' was of some greater duration. For us, things can change so abruptly, so violently, so profoundly, that futures like our grandparents' have insufficient 'now' to stand on. We have no future because our present is too volatile ... We have only risk management. The spinning of the given moment's scenario's. Pattern Recognition. (Gibson 2003:57) [emphasis added]

Marshall McLuhan attributed the profound changes caused by media technologies to the combined impact of the new levels of speed and scale they brought to bear upon our social patterns. Although McLuhan is frequently misappropriated as an optimistic advocate of these technologically mediated changes in scale and pace, a closer reading of his work suggests that, rather than being merely an uncritical endorser, he encourages us to be more suspicious of the social costs of technologically-induced speed. In Vol 1.1. of this journal this suspicion is admirably represented by such articles as those of Goldman, Papson & Kersey whilst, in contrast, Luke and also Williams frequently risk expressing a contemporary updating of Margaret Mead's fifty year old technological determinism. Various theorists of flux provide us with sophisticated reinterpretations of the empowering possibilities opened up by speed, but ultimately, as with Mead's injunction, they are still asking us to take adaptive action. More gallingly, we are encouraged to embrace willingly this need to adapt even as we are told that the speed of technologically-mediated events impels us to carry it out.

In the final quotation above, we can see how William Gibson, the novelist who gave us cyberspace as a working concept, sounds a valuable note of caution. He portrays the social cost of embracing flux as an empty, anomic, commodified existence lived in an unreflexive, eternal now. Volatility replaces properly thought out social responses so that all we are left with is a reactive ability to recognize social patterns we no longer control. The purpose of this paper is to interrogate fiction as a resource that offers a corrective balance to those who would too readily advocate going with the flow of fast capitalism, a widespread theoretical tendency henceforth referred to as flux theory. It is true that speed creates opportunities as well as problems, but unlike management consultants who can make a quick buck from putting such commonplaces into a power point presentation, theorists, at least critical ones, should not hesitate from delivering the pessimistic conclusion that the problems may consistently outweigh the opportunities if this is what the evidence does in fact suggest. Such critical pessimism is increasingly unpalatable within mainstream

academic discourse but it at least avoids swallowing, hook, line and sinker the speed-based ideological manipulations of capitalism as Žižek points out in a similar context: 'The target of critique here involves those aspects of Deleuzianism that, while masquerading as radical chic, effectively transform Deleuze into an ideologist of today's "digital capitalism" (Žižek 2004: xii)

It should be emphasized at this early stage that such pessimism is not a position taken in order merely to provoke. In my work to date I have pursued in detail the various positive forms of oppositional potential that reside within fast capitalism with regard to hacking, hacktivism and Open Source software (see Taylor 1998, 1999, Jordan and Taylor 2004, and Harris and Taylor 2005). What this work demonstrates, however, is that the large body of enthusiastic theorists of flux consistently overestimate the relative significance of such otherwise noble attempts to imaginatively re-orientate the Establishment's technology for more humane purposes. Recognizing the risk that, "the high-speed technological fascination that is characteristic of the postmodern condition can be read ... as a celebration of celebratory capitulation by intellectuals to the new information technology cultures" (Ross 1991: 99), Andrew Ross advocates that theorists learn from the oppositional strategies of the technologically literate:

> If there is a challenge here for cultural critics, it might be the commitment to making our knowledge about technoculture into something like a hacker's knowledge, capable of penetrating existing systems of rationality that might otherwise be seen as infallible; a hacker's knowledge, capable of reskilling and, therefore of rewriting, the cultural programs and reprogramming the social values that make room for new technologies; a hacker's knowledge, capable also of generating new popular romances around the alternative uses of human ingenuity. (Ross 1991: 100)

The problem with this call is that "new popular romances" tend to be recuperated for the capitalist purposes that are far from romantic. Contra Ross, the history of hacking has shown that its knowledge was all too readily co-opted by a capitalism fast enough to recuperate oppositional techniques (see Taylor 1998 & 2005). Hackers were vulnerable to such a reversal and their eventual fate as microserfs because they were always too intimate with the technological object of their affections, celebrators of flux should avoid the same fate in relation to theory.

Excessively enthusiastic theorists of speed thus need a reality check that can ironically be provided by fiction. For example, in Neuromancer, Gibson cogently describes an urban area as "a deliberately unsupervised playground for technology" (Gibson 1984: 19), a useful trope for the way in which fast capitalism needs to grant its citizens a certain amount of freedom only to exploit them better in the long run. If theorists wish to avoid inadvertently becoming cheerleaders for fast capitalism they need to maintain this critical perspective that literature can help provide. Using as a springboard Robert Musil's seminal examination of modernity Der Mann Ohne Eigenschaften (The Man Without Qualities) (1979 [1930]), along with contemporary work dealing specifically with the postmodern world of information technology, I suggest that the notion of pattern recognition can provide an important corrective to excessive optimism. Having recourse to literature in this way may strike some readers as indulgently irrelevant to the key political concerns of the informational world order. On the contrary, I argue that faith in literature's revealing powers as a theoretical resource is one shared by a diverse range of theorists including McLuhan (1995 [1964]), Adorno and Horkheimer (1999 [1944]), Kittler (1997), and Deleuze (1990). Although a theorist of flux whose basic conclusions are rejected in the following sections, Deleuze nevertheless neatly summarizes a key feature of this paper's reliance upon literature with his assertion in The Logic of Sense that artists routinely exhibit clinical and diagnostic attributes to the point that they can be considered: "… astonishing diagnosticians or symptomatologists. There is always a great deal of art involved in the grouping of symptoms … Clinicians who are able to renew a symptomatological picture produce a work of art; conversely, artists are clinicians … they are clinicians of civilisation … and it seems moreover, [this] evaluation of symptoms might only be achieved through a novel. " (Deleuze 1990: 237 [emphasis in original])

Without wishing to preemptively reply to criticisms of this paper's reliance upon the insights of fiction, failure to see the wider importance of literature as an instructive perspective on our predicament within fast capitalism can be seen as a generally unacknowledged symptom of the instrumental one-dimensionality of thought that speed creates in its theorists. To counter this symptom, in The Question Concerning Technology (1977), Heidegger opposes the artistically minded concept of poiesis to the brute facticity of technology's enframing properties. The holistic notion of poiesis involves the genuinely open-minded bringing-forth of the world's potentialities as opposed to the challenging-forth of reality with the preconceived categories that accompany technological thinking. Heidegger succinctly points out that the essence of technology is nothing technological. This means, as in McLuhan's explicit and sustained attention to the ways media affect our sense ratios, that technology's ultimate effects go well beyond its immediate physical properties and affect our whole perceptual approach to the world. Its title resonating with

that of Musil's novel, Marcuse's One Dimensional Man (2002 [1964]) follows a similar theoretical path with his description of how evidence of technology's wider and more subtle social impact is illustrated by the way in which concepts routinely have their substantive meaning eviscerated and then operationalized for more efficient inclusion in pre-ordained structures and systems. Put simply, there is a danger that theories claiming to engage directly with the realities of the information order are in fact guilty of merely reproducing its operational categories in an intellectual context. Unlike the innate sensitivity of novelists to the zeitgeist, speed theorists may obfuscate rather than question the essential nature of fast capitalism.

Even when instrumental theoretical approaches do not confine literature within an aesthetic reservation, free from wider theoretical significance, it remains vulnerable to either obtuse or skillful recuperation. Thus, as with the excessively optimistic appropriation of Marshall McLuhan before him, William Gibson has become known as the original popularizer of the term cyberspace without a more balanced recognition of the admonitions that constantly bubble under the surface of his work. This paper reclaims Gibson's work (in particular the appositely named Pattern Recognition [2003]) to reemphasize the importance of his particularly vivid insights into the particular social patterns caused by the alignment of digital technology and capitalist economics. In doing so I also hope to recover some of the lost irony contained within his oeuvre but consistently overlooked in the salivating excesses of techno-porn (of which Leadbetter [2000] is a particularly egregious example). The notion that Gibson's ironic intent has been lost due to his popular success is perhaps reflected in his tendency to situate his later novels much nearer to the present. This is an act that makes its admonitory quality more difficult to dismiss as the merely futuristic imaginings of science-fiction. In bringing his work into more explicitly contemporary settings, Gibson's fictional perspective still provides him with some critical distance from speed's social effects—a distance that is less easily maintained by uncritical theoretical endorsements of fast capitalism and their over-riding desire to go with the flow. Flux-theorists thus celebrate the decentred, deterritorialized subject of fast capitalism. They are entitled to their creed of speed but their celebration either tends to ignore or pervert the admonitory quality of significant literary accounts of the actual life-world of such a decentred subject.

We shall shortly refer to the useful social science role of literature in more detail, but at this point it is sufficient to point out that in addition to the lost irony of Gibson's oeuvre, such writers as Robert Musil and William Gaddis have also been subject to puzzlingly optimistic interpretations and well-intentioned but ultimately disingenuous reinterpretations. In Musil's much-heralded The Man Without Qualities, for example, notwithstanding the apparent hint in the title, its protagonist Ulrich is interpreted by Jonsson (2000) as an emulatory, prototypical subjectivity for a new age. This is despite the fact that by the end of the novel Ulrich does not provide a clear model with which to compensate for the alarming disintegration of civilization occurring around him. There is just a vague allusion to an ill-defined form of new age consciousness and equally ambiguous hints of an incestuous relationship with his sister. Likewise, in a coincidental pattern of literary criticism, the similarly named Johnston also interprets William Gaddis's work (who in a yet further literary pattern has been confused for William Gibson[1]) as a positive engagement with the new technologically-mediated subject. Flux-theorists seem unable to resist the temptation to indulge in optimistic interpretations of the flux-ridden individual even when confronted by strong evidence in literature that the flows in which such a subject's self-formation takes place are enervating rather than empowering. This evidence abounds in both the eruditely expressed ironies of Gaddis's many layered classical allusions in The Recognitions (1993 [1955]) that impute to contemporary life the quality of a discombobulating simulacra, and the hard to miss (but apparently not impossible) disdain for the spiritual emptiness of capitalism in JR (2003[1976]). Gaddis's negative account of technology's effects culminates in his posthumously published Agape Agape (2005 [2002]), a work that consists of an anguished deathbed jeremiad against the effects of the mediated world upon the traditional lifeworld and how they are underestimated by Walter Benjamin in his Work of Art Essay which is specifically mentioned during the protagonist's stream of ebbing consciousness (ibid: 33).

From such a critical perspective, the new popular romances Ross calls for have indeed been constructed but in the questionable promotion of a heavily mediated subject in a flux-ridden world. It seems clear that literature's aesthetic ironies are seriously in danger of being lost when the individual subject's traditional foundations are enthusiastically replaced by nothing more substantial than the desiring flows of incest and deathbed anger misread as life-affirming catharsis. By contrast, this paper suggests that romantic fictions should be replaced by a less disingenuous recognition of the patterns depicted in fiction that exposes the dark anomic side of fast capitalism's flows. Instead of techno-literacy, and in keeping with Fredric Jameson's idea of a strategy of cognitive mapping with which to orientate ourselves, it reasserts the importance of an old-fashioned literacy, one that is capable of revealing the alienated aspects of the lived-in, phenomenological and ontological nature of fast capitalism's social patterns.

Without the corrective balance of the literary aesthetic, flux theory is at best a theoretical conceit, and at worst, what Jameson terms a blank parody—samplings taken from an overpowering informational zeitgeist that have no deeper, underlying value beyond their tautological justification as acts of sampling.

The im/materiality of flux: the vexed question of the general and the particular

Two particularly important issues that arise from a critical consideration of fast capitalism's flux are:

1. The consistency with which capitalism's flows overwhelm rather than empower.
2. What constitutes evidence of such consistency.

1. The question as to whether there is a consistent element to the negative, dis-empowering outcomes of fast capitalism is a troublesome one. It relates to the highly complex nature of the capitalist system as just that, a systemic totality[2]. Theorists tend to be split between those who emphasize how capitalism's systemic properties work to evacuate the properties of individuality or particularity and those who prefer to emphasize the opportunities for the expression of particularity within its flows and flux. Those who assert the need to conceptualize the systemic totality would include figures from the Western Marxist tradition such as Adorno. He doggedly highlights advanced capitalism's tendency to make the general and the particular interchangeable in a process of abstraction consistently subordinated to the ultimate advantage of a culture industry that thrives upon the homogeneity and standardization that such interchangeability implies. There is a rhetoric of individuality within capitalism, but it is merely a rhetoric that consumers willingly delude themselves with as they perversely express their individuality by consuming commodities also produced for millions of other "individuals".

This is a theme that can be approached through various writers. In History and Class Consciousness (1968: 1922), Lukács identifies the process as a negative, alienating development with his notion of reification, a direct development of Marx's concept of commodity fetishization. Benjamin (1935), by contrast, recognized the process whereby particularity is reduced and abstraction increased but, in what has proved to be a trend amongst later theorists of fast capitalism, he endeavored to put an optimistic gloss upon the situation. He argues that the specific aura of an event is evacuated (pumped, as he puts it "like water from a sinking ship") by its mechanical reproduction, but this opens up new opportunities for the masses. The division between Adorno/Lukács and Benjamin is replayed in more contemporary times. Deleuze (1992) [3], for example, embraces the schizoid possibilities to be enjoyed by the deterritorialized individual (redefined as the dividual) for whom desire and difference become the new guiding principles within fast capitalism's flows. Implicit in Baudrillard's work, by contrast, is a keen awareness of the loss incurred by such deterritorialization. Human beings are freed up only to partake in a highly mediated umbilical limbo of self-referential screens (Baudrillard 2005). What unites the flux-theorists, is their belief that the traditional Cartesian individual who faces an external totality has been fatally undermined and that, à la Mead, we need to adapt to the new social patterns that result.

Due to the speed of technologically-mediated social change, political subjects who previously had a clear view of the social forces devoted to their disempowerment may now be struggling to peer through the mist but this paper highlights the need to at least wipe our spectacles once in a while, or at the very least, not celebrate the mist. Those on the right of the political spectrum have an obvious affinity for fast capitalism as an impressive sign of commodity culture's rude vitality—its creative gales of destruction. However, in a manner that is similar to the accommodative tendencies of cultural populist theories devised to find positive features in the manipulations of an ever more sophisticated culture industry, similarly, flux-theorists seem unduly willing to make a virtue out of the necessity to accommodate to rapid change. For example, Luke (Fast Capitalism Vol 1.1) provides a good overview of theorists who view quasipolitics unironically, as a concept to work with, rather than an apt description of the technology-sponsored evacuation of substantive political issues. Quasipolitics thus refers to the way in which the level of technological mediation of society has created new forms of politics at a micro-level in a manner similar to Foucault's bio-power (1998). Whilst figures such as Hardt and Negri (2000 & 2005) have at least attempted to argue that this corporate invasion of cultural life creates oppositional possibilities, flux-optimists seem more concerned with re-describing the corporate takeover as socially beneficial in and of itself so that: "There has been in this respect what one can only characterize as a pervasive failure of political nerve, and in some cases an accelerating, sometimes squalid process of accommodation by sectors of the left to the priorities of a capitalist politics". (Eagleton 1990: 6)

Instead of connoting passivity, "going with the flow" now seems to have to have assumed the status of a political strategy—albeit one attuned to fast means as an end in themselves rather than a more radical political telos.

2. What constitutes evidence of such regularity? What unites theorists with otherwise radically different perspectives about fast capitalism is the way in which they share a focus upon the relationship between the material and the immaterial, a tension I have previously discussed in detail in terms of im/materiality (Taylor and Harris 2005). They either welcome the conflation of the material and the abstract or they stubbornly insist that the distinction remains an important one. It is a tension that literature is well-placed to illuminate, grounded as it is in the realm of the aesthetic, a realm intrinsically positioned to be a powerful mode of inquiry into the dynamic relationship between things and thoughts, objects and representations, sensuality and abstract thought. The novelists examined below help to refocus our attention upon the im/material. Fiction is shown to provide particularly useful insights into the productive tension between the general and particular that fast capitalism tends to drown out with the much simpler one dimensional phenomenon of speed-induced flux. Literature's aesthetic makes it a valuable non-instrumental mode of thought with which to escape such one dimensionality: "Nothing could be more disabled than a ruling rationality which can know nothing beyond its own concepts ... aesthetic cognition mediates between the generalities of reason and the particulars of sense." (Eagleton 1990: 14 & 15) Rather than giving into the temptations of flux theory: "The indissoluble must be brought into its own in concepts, not subsumed under the an abstract idea in that generalized barter of the mind which mirrors the equalizing exchanges of the market place." (ibid: 345) Those theorists who seek to ground the notion of the subject in deterritorialized flows risk merely providing intellectual ex post facto justifications of fast capitalism's project.

In literature: 'the hidden irrationality of a rationalized society is brought to light; for art is a 'rational' end in itself, whereas capitalism is irrationally so. Art ... might thus be said to represent an arational reason confronting an irrational rationality ... the process by which rationality criticizes itself without being able to overcome itself.' (ibid: 351) Thus, aesthetic sensibility should not be seen as a substitute for rational theories but a complementary resource with which to plug its gaps: 'There can be no question ... of aestheticizing philosophy in the sense of reducing cognition to intuition, since art ... is itself in its peculiar sort of way a form of rationality. Where theory is to be aestheticized is in its approach to the particular; art does not exactly oust systematic thought, but furnishes it with a model of sensuous receptivity to the specific.' (ibid: 361) The novelists explored here provide a valuable corrective to flux theory by evocatively and sensuously expressing the particularity of the phenomenological experience that is fast capitalism by describing it more accurately than theory can alone. Most importantly, they recognize the social pattern of the speed-based forces arrayed against those social groups seeking to use advanced technologies for non-capitalist purposes.

Living and dying in flux—the flâneur and cyberpunk

> The flâneur ... is an image of movement through the social space of modernity ... The flâneur is a multi-layered palimpsest that enables us to 'move' from real products of modernity, like commodification and leisured patriarchy, through the practical organisation of space and its negotiation by inhabitants of a city, to a critical appreciation of the state of modernity and its erosion into the post- ... (Jenks 1995: 149)

The rapid urbanization of the Industrial Revolution brought with it profound social flux. Within this flux, Charles Baudelaire described the urban wanderings of the flâneur, a mid 19th Century quasi-fictional Parisian figure who can be conceived of as a short-lived personification/imaginative representation of the role soon to be taken over by the camera's lens. The flâneur was a man in the crowd but not of the crowd, he was a dandyish figure with enough time on his hands to observe the constant motion of the vibrant city that passed him by as an impartial spectator. This elegant bystander viewed the cityscape as a mysterious code to be deciphered and the gaze with which he observed these scenes were immortalised in various Impressionist paintings. In his Painter of Modern Life, Baudelaire famously elaborated upon the historical epoch the flâneur was witnessing: "By 'modernity' I mean the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent". (Baudelaire 2003: 12) The experience of the flâneur and his perambulations amidst the rapid social change of 19th Century Paris serve as a usefully illustrative precursor of the increasingly fragmented and culturally dislocated nature of the social environment within fast capitalism. The flâneur provides an interesting trope for the themes of this paper, because he (and the flâneur 's gaze was invariably a male one) and his

encounter with the rapidly speeding up city represents an emblematic confrontation with the socially disorientating consequences of modernity that precedes later conceptualizations of flux. Like the flâneur , Edgar Allan Poe's 'Man of the Crowd' (1992 [1850]) wishes to be part of the urban throng and for him, like the later hacker/cyberpunk, 'curiosity has become a fatal, irresistible passion.' (cited in Frisby 1983: 17) It is important to emphasize here that what unites the flâneur and cyberpunk as the prototypical figures of modernity and postmodernity, respectively, is curiosity for the new social flows—not human feeling for fellow citizens. The traditional aesthetic's human-centred mediation between the particular and the general is sublimated here into an individual's solipsistic appreciation of fast capitalism's new abstractly systemic totalities.

A rapidly changing Nineteenth Century Paris is thus for the flâneur what the Matrix is for the cyberpunk:

> The crowd is his element, as the air is that of birds and water of fishes. His passion and his profession are to become one flesh with the crowd. For the perfect flâneur , for the passionate spectator, it is an immense joy set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb & flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive & the infinite. To be away from home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, and yet to remain hidden from the world ... the lover of universal life enters into the crowd as if it were an immense reservoir of electrical energy. (Baudelaire 2003: 9-10 [emphasis added])

Whilst the vestigial manifestations of urban spatialization provided the flâneur with fodder for his curiosity and entertainment, the onward march of capitalist modernity proved too rapid for the survival of the idly strolling dandy. As the nineteenth century progressed, the flâneur increasingly lost his aura of detached superiority and care-free flippancy. In Balzac's portrayal, for example, the flâneur is said to become: 'a truly hapless soul, whom the city overwhelms rather than fascinates. Far from empowering the walker in the street, the altered urban context disables the individual. Distance and inactivity no longer connote superiority to the milieu, but suggest quite the opposite—estrangement, alienation, anomie.' (Ferguson 1994: 33) In Robert Musil's The Man Without Qualities, this inexorable speeding up of flow has fatal implications for other forms of social life. This is dramatically embodied in the truck that knocks down and kills the flâneur -like figure of a pedestrian in the rapidly urbanizing city of Vienna. This pedestrian rather literally fails to go with a flow in which:

> Motor-cars came shooting out of deep, narrow streets into the shallows of bright squares. Dark patches of pedestrian bustle formed into cloudy streams. Where stronger lines of speed transected their loose-woven hurrying, they clotted up—only to trickle on all the faster then and after a few ripples regain their regular pulse-beat ... the general movement pulsed through the streets ... Like all big cities, it consisted of irregularity, change, sliding forward, not keeping in step, collision of things and affairs, and fathomless points of silence in between, of paved ways and wilderness, of one great rhythmic throb and the perpetual discord and dislocation of all opposing rhythms, and as a whole resembled a seething, bubbling fluid in a vessel consisting of the solid material of buildings, laws, regulations, and historical traditions. (Musil 1979: 3 & 4)

In a manner frequently used in cyberpunk fiction, the human and biological are here counterpoised with the technological and its inhuman movement. The geometric vectors of speed transect the more organic movements of the crowd to create a bubbling vessel that resonates with Marx's famous description of capitalist environment as one in which 'all that's solid melts into air'. To stay alive, people must submit themselves totally to the movement and bustle of the 'cloudy streams'. Movement is equated by Musil with the heartbeat of life and a lack of motion implies the danger of a blood clot. This portrayal of the need for an adaptive response to a new social pattern of speed returns us to Margaret Mead's injunction at the start of this article and it is a central element of the cyberpunk genre's message, the full irony of which flux-theorists consistently overlook.

Futuristic flu or *retro-futuristic chronosemiitis* are the somewhat tongue-in-cheek phrases used by Istvan Csiscery-Ronay to describe the sense of dislocation that accompanies the advent of such 'speed-up' (see Taylor 2001). The 'now' seems almost instantaneously and anachronistically redundant whilst the future is never quite within reach. Futuristic flu is cyberpunk's distinguishing leitmotif as it takes the accelerated socio-technical change of the industrial revolution to 'warp-speed' levels. 'Night City was like a deranged experiment in social Darwinism, designed by a bored researcher who kept one thumb permanently on the fast-forward button.' (Gibson 1984:14). 'Strange euphoria' (Gibson ibid: 19) is felt negotiating both the 'dance of biz' in the streets and its simulated informational form found in the matrix. The rapid tempo of the dance is such that informational immersion is a sine qua non of survival and requires that you: 'throw yourself into a highspeed drift and skid.' (Gibson ibid: 26) Frenetic activity is the background noise of everyday existence and there is a similar sentiment to Musil's notion of the clot: 'Stop hustling and you sank without a trace … Biz here was a constant subliminal hum.' (Gibson ibid: 14) Life takes on the aspect of a feral fight to survive by means of the constant movement Musil highlights in a nascent modernity that

preceeded fast capitalism in full flow: 'To stand still ...is like stopping swimming for a shark. You sink to the bottom, and can't stop moving again.' (Smith 1996: 202). Whilst such descriptions, in addition to Musil's dead pedestrian, vividly evoke the urgency of the need to adapt to the flow, they do not provide much of an insight into any inherent worth of such flux. Like the commodity form to which fast capitalism's flows are ultimately subordinated, flows appear to be their own tautological justification.

Prefiguring Morse (1998) and Bauman's (2000) emphasis upon the liquidity of the contemporary experience, Simmel's overall sociological project can be seen as an examination of the cost to the individual and wider society of this environment in which 'all that is solid melts into air'. Frisby argues that Simmel's work 'is located within the context of a permanent and accelerating opposition between subjective and objective culture.' (Frisby 1986: 41) In Simmel's Uber sociale Differenzierung (1890), for example, he argues that 'the increased externalisation of life that has come about, with regard to the preponderance that the technical side of life has obtained over its inner side, over its personal values'. (cited in Frisby 1986: 42). Frisby succinctly summarizes the central effect of a pervasive sense of fluidity: 'The external world becomes part of our inner world. In turn, the substantive element of the external world is reduced to a ceaseless flux and its fleeting, fragmentary and contradictory moments are all incorporated into our inner life.' (Frisby 1986: 46) According to Lukács, people are required to live within a huge socio-technical assemblage that appears to exist over their heads and against which subjectivity battles to assert itself: "Quality no longer matters. Quantity along decides everything" … Thus time sheds its qualitative, variable, flowing nature; it freezes into an exactly delimited, quantifiable continuum filled with quantifiable 'things' (the reified, mechanically objectified 'performance' of the worker, wholly separated from his total human personality): in short, time becomes space. (Lukács 1968 [1922]: 90 {emphasis added}).

It is this evisceration of time's quality and its translation into a quantifiable medium that lies behind the crucial process of reification in which our prior notion of internal consciousness is increasingly difficult to distinguish from the reality that surrounds us. It also constitutes a significant point of agreement between otherwise radically opposed thinkers. It fits with: McLuhan's concept of electronic media as the outering of the human sensorium; the enthusiatic theorizing of the deterritorialized subject; and various novelists who are concerned about the existential consequences of such a process. Updating Simmel's account of modernity for the further speeded up context of contemporary fast capitalism, J. G. Ballard, for example, suggests that: 'In the past we have always assumed that the external work around us has represented reality, however confusing or uncertain, and that the inner world of our minds, its dreams, hopes, ambitions, represented the realm of fantasy and the imagination. These roles its seems to me have been reversed … the one small node of reality left to us is inside our own heads.' (Ballard 1995:5). According to this latter perspective, literature is an important resource because it equips the otherwise denuded subject with the mental resources to realize when the apparently empowering flows of the desiring schizoid individual do in fact represent a social pattern based upon alienation and anomie.

Psychoanalysis in reverse—people and places without qualities

> 'The heart is a muscle,' ... 'You "know" in your limbic brain. The seat of instinct. The mammalian brain. Deeper, wider beyond logic. That is where advertising works, not in the upstart cortex. What we think of as 'mind' is only a sort of jumped-up gland, piggybacking on the reptilian brainstem and the older, mammalian mind, but our culture tricks us into recognizing it as all of consciousness. The mammalian spreads continent-wide beneath it, mute and muscular, attending its ancient agenda. And makes us buy things ... When I founded Blue Ant, that was my core tenet, that all truly viable advertising addresses that older, deeper mind, beyond language and logic.' (Gibson 2003: 69)

Lowenthal described the culture industry as "psychoanalysis in reverse" meaning that instead of attempting to discover and cure our deepest neuroses and complexes, it uncovers only in order to massage them for the purposes of exploitation and commercial gain. Whilst Gibson's earlier work describes the plaisir experienced within capital's fast flows, it also heavily implies that authentically empowering again—jouissance is lacking. In addition to the drug-like dependency Case (Neuromancer's cyberpunk protagonist) has for the Matrix, Dixie Flatline is a character who only consists of a disembodied perpetually online character. In Pattern Recognition, Gibson pays more explicit attention to this lack in relation to contemporary commodity culture. To the extent that flows have a determining meaning it is one dominated by the essentially existentially empty commodity form. For Gibson, information in fast capitalism serves to effect the process of psychoanalysis in reverse as effectively and subtly as possible. As one

of his characters, Bigend, the head of a cutting-edge advertising agency puts it: 'I want to make the public aware of something they don't quite yet know that they know—or have them feel that way. Because they'll move on that, do you understand? They'll think they thought of it first. It's about transferring information, but at the same time about a certain lack of specificity.' (Gibson 2003: 63) In fast capitalism, what ultimately matters, is not an object's essential qualities but its position within a set of relations. This set of relations has evolved from Marx's notion of exchange-value to one of a highly sophisticated sign value that appeals, as we can see in the quotation above directly to the consumer's limbic id rather than any socially responsible superego. Gibson's fictional id-centred company, Blue Ant, is a corporate solution to Simmel and Ballard's inner/outer confusion premised upon the creation of an atmosphere that is nominally external to the human subject but which in practice appeals in a highly effective way to the subconscious. For example, the sexualized image of a woman is used in Pattern Recognition to entrap a hacker in a manner typical of the wider process of id-driven commodification: 'Bigend would recognize the image-toggle instantly, childlike innocence and hardboiled come-on alternating at some frequency beyond perception.' (Gibson 2003: 128) It is at points like this that the aesthetic function of literature comes into its own. Gibson describes here a felt experience beyond the bounds of conventional social science but none the less real for that.

In Kracauer's essay "The Hotel Lobby" (1995 [1963]), he highlights the atemporality of the hotel's artificially enclosed environment as a microcosm of the wider essential emptiness of a fast capitalism that redefines time in terms of the homogeneous spatial flows. In contrast to Deleuze and Guatarri's celebration of the schizoid personality, the lobby's denizens are dismissed as mannequins [4]. This fits with Lukács's conception of capitalism's reifying tendencies and its effect upon the decentred subject who becomes a cog in an overarching mechanical system (a process which exponentially speeds up with the advent of digitality). Such a system acts to: 'transform the basic categories of man's immediate attitude to the world: it reduces space and time to a common denominator and degrades time to the dimension of space. (Lukács 1968 [1922]: 89 {emphasis added}) There are a number of novelists from whom one can cull richly detailed examples of both the personality types and their physical environments produced within this reduction of time to space and its subsequent transformation of traditional human categories. In the archetypal flux-novel Transmission, Kunzru delineates the appositely named Guy Swift a character who, cosmocratically flying over communities of the dispossessed, is like the flâneur, he is in but not of society. Mirroring Cayce, the commodity cool-hunter from Pattern Recognition, Swift's comparative advantage is his preternatural sensitivity to the libidinal flows of fast capitalism to the extent that he feels that his relationship to the future is a personal one: 'In certain places—on moving walkways, at trade shows, in car showrooms—he felt it was physically connected to him, as through some unexplained mechanism futurity was feeding back into his body: an alien fibrillation, a flutter of potential'. (Kunzru 2004: 20) As such Guy Swift represents a powerful example of Eagleton's further development of Luckac's reified subject into the über-postmodern person:

> **With postmodernism, the will turns back upon itself and colonizes the strenuously willing subject itself. It gives birth to a human being every bit as protean and diffuse as the society around it. The creature who emerges from postmodern thought is centreless, hedonistic, self-inventing, ceaselessly adaptive ... Postmodernists oppose universality, and well they might; nothing is more parochial than the kind of human they admire ... The human subject finally breaks free of the restriction which is itself. If all that is solid must be dissolved into air, there can be no exceptions made for human beings. (Eagleton 2003:190)**

This description appears extremely close to Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the schizoid individual. The main difference is perhaps the aesthetically-informed response such a character type produces. For celebrants of fast capitalism this is a figure to be aspired to, for critical theorists it is a disturbing, emptied-out, commodified caricature of what it is to be authentically human.

In Guy Swift we see the resulting invasive commercialization of the individual in the mix of New Age depthlessness with the amoral scientific application of the the limbic strategies preferred by Bigend: 'he had experienced what he described as a personal epiphany, the realization at a full moon party in Thailand that his future lay in the science of 'deep branding', the great quest to harness what ... he termed the 'emotional magma that wells from the core of planet brand'. (Kunzru 2004: 20). At the broader societal level, it is equally unclear from literature what advantages stem from the deterritorialization of the individual. In Baudrillard's take on fast capitalism, 'Astral America. The lyrical nature of pure circulation.' (Baudrillard 1988: 27), we encounter his notion of the aggregate version of the deterritorialized individual, the fatal masses: '…this going beyond the social, the irruption of the more social than social—the mass; this is a social that has absorbed all the inverse energies of the antisocial, of inertia, resistance and silence.' (Baudrillard 1990: 10). The corresponding literary aesthetic suggests that such a public:

> ... is best visualized as a vicious, lazy, profoundly ignorant, perpetually hungry organism craving the warm god-flesh of the anointed. Personally I like to imagine something the size of a baby hippo, the color of a week-old boiled potato, that lives by itself, in the dark, in a double-wide on the outskirts of Topeka. It's covered with eyes and it sweats constantly. The sweat runs into those eyes and makes them sting. It has no mouth ... no genitals, and can only express its mute extremes of murderous rage and infantile desire by changing the channels on a universal remote. Or by voting in presidential elections. (Gibson 1996: 28-29)

Matching the death of the individual flâneur, such masses mark the death of the body politic paradoxically discussed, as it is, in gross physical terms redolent of fast capitalism's patrician, Guy Swift-like desire to stay above the seething masses.

Ballard's work consistently provides powerful descriptions of the sterile, decontextualized physical environments that are the corollary to the intensely felt personal immersion into informational flows by such contrasting figures as Guy Swift and Gibson's vividly literal couch potato. In Cocaine Nights, for example, his narrator describes travelling through the communities of the expatriate rich in southern Spain: 'I seemed to be moving through a zone that was fully accessible only to a neuroscientist, and scarcely at all to a travel writer. The white facades of the villas and apartment houses were like blocks of time that had crystallized beside the road. Here on the Costa del Sol nothing would ever happen again, and the people of the pueblos were already the ghosts of themselves.' (Ballard 1997: 75) Such ghosts need only 'that part of the external world that was distilled from the sky by their satellite dishes.' (Ballard 1997: 216) In society of flux: 'it's irritating to be reminded of the contingent world.' 'A drifting leaf? A passing rain-shower? Bird shit on the sleeve?" "That sort of thing". (Ballard 2001: 19) The running tracks are 'manicured' (ibid: 18), 'the golf courses began to multiply like the symptoms of a hypertrophied grassland cancer". (Ballard 1997: 15) and, 'Over the immaculate gardens hung the air of well-bred catatonia that only money can buy'. (ibid:20) The sterility of such a lifeworld suggests that the desiring flows of fast capitalism are less organically carnivalesque than they might superficially appear:

> She's never actually seen soil emerge from any incision they might make in the street, here; it's as though there is nothing beneath the pavement but a clean, uniformly dense substrate of pipes and wiring. She walks on ... until she finds herself nearing Kabukicho, the all-night zone they call Sleepless Castle, its streets bright as day, very few surfaces lacking at least one highly active source of illumination ... the land of mahjong parlours ... sex shops, video porn ... but all of it managed with a Vegas-like sobriety of intent that makes her wonder how much fun any of it could really be, even for the committed enthusiast ... restless street-level facades seeming to form a single unbroken surface of neon carnival excess (Gibson 2003: 130-131)

The above examples suggest that we should be more sensitive to what our embracement of fast capitalism's flows implies for the state of our human qualities: 'The lack of something definite at the centre of the soul impels us to search for momentary satisfaction in ever-new stimulations, sensations and external activities. Thus it is that we become entangled in the instability and helplessness that manifests itself as the tumult of the metropolis' (cited in Frisby 1986: 72) Like the behind-the-scenes machinery and logistical scale of the 'spontaneous' fun of a theme park, the frantic flows of fast capitalism's carnival of excess belie the manufactured inner emptiness of their anomic hues of neon.

Time Squared

> In the centers of night life the illumination is so harsh that one has to hold one's hands over one's ears. Meanwhile the lights have gathered for their own pleasure, instead of shining for man. Their glowing traces want to illuminate the night but succeed only in chasing it away. Their advertisements sink into the mind without allowing one to decipher them. The reddish gleam that lingers settles like a cloak over one's thoughts. (Kracauer 1995: 43)

As capitalism has matured, Baudelaire's reservoir of electricity has become less metaphorical and now appears across a wide timescale of literature that deals with the new atmosphere created in urban centres. Kracauer's above account owes something to Simmel's concepts of neurasthenia, Chokerlebnis and new blasé mental attitudes that urban dwellers need to adopt as a survival strategy for the qualitatively new social conditions created by mass living. In flux theory such practical accommodation has assumed an uncritical, celebratory bent so that seventy three years after Kracauer's essay, John Seabrook can describe with enjoyment how:

> The air was fuzzy with the weird yellow tornado light of Times Square by day, a blend of sunlight and wattage, the real and the mediated—the color of Buzz. Buzz is the collective stream of consciousness. William James's "buzzing confusion," objectified, a shapeless substance into which politics and gossip, art and pornography, virtue and money, the fame of heroes and the celebrity of murderers, all bleed. In Times Square you could see the Buzz that you felt going through your mind. I found it soothing just to stand there on my way to and from work and let the yellow light run into my synapses. In that moment the worlds outside and inside my skull became one. (Seabrook 2000: 5)

Seabrook's panegyric from his book Nobrow (so entitled to indicate how society has now supplanted high brow culture) provides an interesting contrast to Kracauer's work at various levels. Like Kracauer and Benjamin, he emphasizes the undermining of the real by the mediated (Benjamin's loss of aura and Kracauer's sense of the growing autonomy of mediated values over the original ones they supplant). The very name Times Square resonates with both Kracauer's conceptions of memory as a distinctly human category of non-mediated time and the strangely affective, Matrix-precursing town square Kracauer and Benjamin found together in Marseille and which the former nicknamed in their correspondence the "Place de l'Observance" [5] and which led Kracauer to describe how: 'once its observers have settled into their chairs, it expands toward the four sides of the world, overpowering the pitiful, soft, private parts of the dream: it is a square without mercy. [6]' (Kracauer 1995: 39) Seabrook, replaces Kracauer's concern with the overpowering, merciless, cerebrally invasive, of such squares with their "reddish gleam that lingers settles like a cloak over one's thoughts" with an uncritically enjoyable "buzz". For Kracauer, technology produces a heavily mediated "collective stream of consciousness" that replaces a 'liberated consciousness'. Rational understanding (vernunft) is fatally undermined by the perversion of reason embodied in the Ratio of the mass ornament of commodity society conveyed through such vehicles as photography's stream of contingent images, its "blizzard of photographs".

This new stream of unliberated, flux-ridden consumer consciousness is a common theme in cyberpunk's vivid portrayal of Kracauer's observations. Neil Stephenson's Snowcrash (1993), for example, provides the concept of the loglo which Stephenson describes in relation to the experience of a high-speed pizza-delivery man, the Deliverator ('a Type A driver with Rabies' [ibid: 7]) hurtling along a private freeway, CSV-5 thus: 'The loglo, overhead, marking out the CSV-5 in twin contrails, is a body of electrical light made of innumerable cells, each cell designed in Manhattan by imageers … Despite their efforts to stand out, they all smear together, especially at a hundred and twenty kilometres per hour.' (ibid: 7) Early in the novel Spares, the protagonist Randal describes how the the flux described in the above accounts of the neon aesthetic act invasively upon previously identifiable architectural structures serving to further blur the individual's sense of the distinction to be made between their inside/outside, and the im/material. He describes the huge oblong strucuture of a shopping complex (the MegaMall) that has successfully commodified the role previously played by cities: "I stared out at the points of light, the studs in the mind-fuckingly large expanse of wall. It still looked extraordinary, still said to me, as it always had, that I had to be inside it." (Smith 1996: 15) Faced with fast capitalism, flux theory risks aping Randal at his most uncritical and impressionable, to the extent that it engages with flux but, in its desire to enter it, loses its critical edge: 'Intellectual matters are no longer an ivory-tower affair, but belong to the world of media and shopping malls, bedrooms and brothels. As such, they rejoin everyday life—but only at the risk of losing their ability to subject it to critique.' (Eagleton 2003: 3).

In contrast, that critical distance is still possible for literature because of the ability of the aesthetic mode to address the im/material tension of the sensuous and the abstract. Gibson describes the technologically-mediated phenomenology of life on the street but does so with a sophisticated appreciation of the level of radicality to be found there. Gibson is thus lauded for his literary street credibility: 'Gibson puts an end to that ... white-bread technocrat in his ivory tower ... In Gibson's work we find ourselves in the streets and alleys, in a realm of sweaty, white-knuckled survival, where high tech is a constant subliminal hum, 'like a deranged experiment in social Darwinism, designed by a bored researcher who kept one thumb permanently on the fast-forward button.' (Sterling in Gibson 1988: 11). In his short story "Burning Chrome", a character describes how he is using a 'Vasopressin inhaler' to get high and that 'Clinically they use the stuff to counter senile amnesia, but the street finds its own uses for things.' (Gibson 1986: 215 [emphasis added]) This theme of the radical oppositional potential in any technology runs throughout Gibson's novels. It has been adopted more widely as a hacker motto and arguably informs some of the theoretical literature that seeks a positive, empowering potential in the technologies of fast capitalism.

Importantly, however, Gibson avoids the temptation over-valorize the street's ability to oppose fast capitalism's imperatives. Parallel to his sense of the street's oppositional ability to re-engineer technology, comes a sensitivity (frequently lacking in flux theories) to the ease with which such opposition is recuperated by fast capitalism. In Neuromancer, we have already seen how the flux of the urban environment is described as 'a deliberately unsupervised

playground for technology itself.' (Gibson 1984: 19) Later in Pattern Recognition, this recuperation extends to the non-systemic elements of the street and its previous status as a place of relative respite from the remorseless spread of the commodity form: 'Cayce ... has been tracking the street-level emergence of what she thinks of as 'urban survival' footwear, and though this is so far at the level of consumer re-purposing, she has no doubt that commodification will soon follow identification'. (Gibson 2003: 9-10) In terms redolent of a military operation: 'She's been dropped into neighbourhoods like Dogtown, which birthed skateboarding, to explore roots in hope of finding whatever the next thing might be ... She's met the very Mexican who first wore his baseball cap backwards.' (Gibson 2003: 32). Gibson portrays a society in which inventive deviations from the commodified norm are tolerated only for as long as it takes to commodify such novelty.

The Anomic Monadic Moment

> We may forget about totality, but totality, for good or ill, will not forget about us, even in our most microscopic meditations. If we can unpack the whole from the most humble particular, glimpse eternity in a grain of sand, this is because we inhabit a social order which tolerates particularity only as an obedient instantiation of the universal. We must no longer aim thought directly at this totality, but neither should we surrender ourselves to some pure play of difference, which would be quite as monotonous as the dreariest self-identity and indeed finally indistinguishable from it. (Eagleton 1990: 346)

Above, Eagleton describes Adorno's notion of the micrological immersion. This is an important alternative to the uncritical immersion of flux theory. In Gibson's previous account of the ultimate fate of street fashion we have seen how the social pattern of fast capitalism is one that 'tolerates particularity only as an obedient instantiation of the universal.' It is no surprise that critical figures like Adorno, Jameson and Eagleton who emphasize the importance of maintaining a focus upon the tension between the general and the particular, are not averse to using literature as a complement to their theory. This is because literature still has the power to steer us clear of identity thinking and show us the price to be paid for our contemporary accommodation with the systematizing totality of flux in terms of individual alienation and more general urban estrangement. In The Arcades Project (1999) Benjamin attempted to interpret phantasmagorical nature of capitalist reality more positively—in terms of a historical past. Here he saw the opportunities the weird and wonderful juxtaposition of commodities created for sudden explosive insights into the historical nature of a given moment in a process variously translated from the original German as a configuration or constellation. In his On the Concept of History, he highlights the weaknesses of a universal history (akin to flux theory) that lacks a: 'theoretical armature. Its procedure is additive; it musters a mass of data to fill the homogeneous, empty time.' (Benjamin 2003 [1940] 396) To compensate:

> Materialistic historiography, on the other hand, is based on a constructive principle. Thinking involves not only the movement of thoughts, but their arrest as well. Where thinking suddenly comes to a stop in a constellation saturated with tensions, it gives that constellation a shock, by which thinking is crystallized as a monad. The historical materialist approaches a historical subject only where it confronts him as a monad. In this structure he recognizes the sign of a Messianic arrest of happening, or (to put it differently) a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past. He takes cognizance of it in order to blast a specific era out of the homogeneous course of history; thus, he blasts a specific life out of the era, a specific work out of the lifework. As a result of this method the lifework is both preserved and sublated in the work, the era in the lifework, and the entire course of history Min the era. The nourishing fruit of what is historically understood contains time in its interior as a precious but tasteless seed. (Benjamin 2003 [1940] Thesis XVII [original italics, emboldened emphasis added])

We can see here how amidst movement there is a need to seek an arrest of time so that it can be reduced to a human scale. The existential tension that human(e)ly experienced time contains between the past, present, and future of a moment needs to be reclaimed from the relentless rush of technological mediation. In his essay, "On Photography", Kracauer argues that:

> In order for history to present itself, the mere surface coherence offered by photography must be destroyed. For in the artwork the meaning of the object takes on spatial appearance, whereas in photography the spatial appearance of an object is its meaning. The two spatial appearances—the "natural" one and that of the object permeated by cognition—are not identical ... The artwork, too, disintegrates over time; but its meaning arises out of its crumbled elements, whereas photography merely stockpiles the elements. (Kracauer 1995: 52)

Literature is arguably at its most useful as a corrective to flux theory when it focuses upon such crumbled

elements. In Spares (1996), for example, the protagonist Randal stumbles across some children's tricycles only to find that they are permanent fixtures glued to the floor to provide residents of the Darwinian post-social Megamall with an object permeated by at least the trace of cognition in the form of fake nostalgia. Fast capitalism has moved on apace since Musil's Vienna and Gibson provides us with a suitably altered account that not only takes such exponentially increased speed into account. Set in a New York street near to the site and seconds before the 9-11 tragedy it provides a powerful example of a Benjaminian seed of time:

> She had watched a single petal fall, from a dead rose, in the tiny display window of an eccentric Spring Street dealer in antiques ... The dead roses, arranged in an off-white Fiestaware vase, appeared to have been there for several months. They would have been white, when fresh, but now looked like parchment ... the objects in the window seemed to change in accordance with some peculiar poetry of their own, and she was in the habit, usually, of pausing to look when she passed this way. The fall of the petal, and somewhere a crash, taken perhaps as some impact of large trucks, one of those unexplained events in the sonic backdrop of lower Manhattan. Leaving her sole witness to this minute fall. Perhaps there is a siren then or sirens, but there are always sirens, in New York. (Gibson 2003: 135-136)

Whether such an incident as this is described as a monadic moment, a constellation/configuration or a micrological immersion, Benjamin's hopes for a revelatory power have been reduced yet further from the site of Ballard's hypertrophied grassland cancer of golf-courses irrigated by capital to the contemplation of a single dead petal.

Cayce experiences Simmell and Ballard's previously cited ontological reversal of the conventional conceptualization of an inside/outside so that witnessing the 9-11 tragedy from a nearby towerblock becomes: 'like watching one of her own dreams on television. Some vast and deeply personal insult to any ordinary notion of interiority. An experience outside of culture.' (Gibson 2003: 137) The reified society of brands in which objects assume the status of social relations in contrast to people's objectified ones and to which Cayce has such an involuntary affinity, is, in this monadic moment, thrown into understated relief by a small collection of antique objects that as in Benjamin's arcades have retained 'some peculiar poetry of their own'. Instead of Musil's truck, this time we have just the mistaken impression that one has crashed. What has actually happened is that into the the urban illogicality of urban commodity culture has irrupted a much darker fundamentalism with its own conception of universal history. Thus, via his use of the aesthetic, Gibson demonstrates to us the catastrophic results of our social immersion in the logic-free neon sea that Kracauer previously identified as acting like a cloak over our thoughts: 'Looking up now into the manically animated forest of signs, she sees the Coca-Cola logo pulsing on a huge screen, high up on a building, followed by the slogan "NO REASON!" This vanishes, replaced by a news clip, dark-skinned men in bright robes. She blinks, imagining the towers burning there, framed amid image-flash and whirl. (Gibson 2003: 125) Whereas in The Dialectic of Enlightenment (1999 [1949]), Horkheimer and Adorno describe the mythological Sirens against whose temptations Odysseus is forced to bind himself to his ship's mast, here Cayce experiences immensely more mundane sirens. Representing the atrophied allure of the essentially empty, but nevertheless, stockpiled brand environment she douses for commercial purposes, these New York sirens merely act as unexplained events in a wider sonic backdrop. They serve to foreground the existential importance of a disintegrating rose. If not a lily of the field, Gibson's dessicated petal does at least provide a hint of Benjamin's 'Messianic cessation of happening'.

Conclusion—In Search of Lost Time

> Let Proust have his madeleines. We have ads. Some of my students are embarassed ... that cultural junk food is what they share ... Yet it is precisely the recognition of jingles and brand names, precisely what high culturists abhor, that links us as a culture. More than anything else this paper-thin familiarity is what gives Adcult its incredible reach and equally incredible shallowness. It is a culture without memory and hence without depth. (Twitchell 1996: 7)

> Capitalism ... for all its crass materialism, is secretly allergic to matter. No individual object can fulfil its voracious appetite as it hunts its way restlessly from one to the other, dissolving each of them to nothing in doomed pursuit of its ultimate desire. For all its love affair with matter, in the shape of Tuscan villas and double brandies, capitalist society harbours a secret hatred of the stuff. It is a culture shot through with fantasy, idealist to its core, powered by a disembodied will which dreams of pounding Nature to pieces. It makes an idol out of matter, but cannot stomach the resistance it offers to its grandiose schemes. (Eagleton 2003: 165)

Twitchell's above rejection of memory and cultural depth is unusual for its forthright acceptance of the (il) logical cultural consequences of the shift that occurs in the social pattern of a society subjected to an unprecedented

rise in the quantity of images and sounds to produce a qualitatively new cultural environment largely shorn of an authentic sense of time and substance. We have seen previously how Lukács highlights the translation of time into space and this is of a piece with Jameson's (1991) description of postmodern experience as involving the "waning of affect". Flux theory's tendency to uncritically celebrate capitalism's speed and ability to abstract from the particularity of a sensuality situated in a human-centred time suggests that it is intellectual defeatism masquerading as a realistic accommodation to the historical situation. From Eagleton's assessment of capitalism's allergy to matter we can see at least the hint of a more critical mode of resistance to fast capitalism based upon paying more precise attention to the significance of what matters. This is a task that is greatly aided by the literary aesthetic and its innate focus upon the tension between the sensuality of the particular and the abstractness of the totality. Despite its rhetorical calls to find new ways to live in fast capitalism, flux theory's worst feature is its tendency to glibly disregard the political significance of that human experience mired deep in the midst of time and matter. The literary aesthetic may often appear far removed from direct politics but this paper argues that it is an essential part of the political unconscious needed to help us find a grounded 'street' perspective that is not in thrall to fast capitalism and such beliefs as: 'Instability of identity is 'subversive'—a claim which it would be interesting to test out among the socially dumped and disregarded'. (Eagleton 2003: 16) This is a perspective either avoided by flux-theorists and Guy Swift alike or merely co-opted into their flows:'... the rich have mobility while the poor have locality. Or rather, the poor have locality until the rich get their hands on it.' (ibid: 22) Despite offering to leave the time-bound Proust with his madeleine, the attitudes flux theory adopts to time and matter means that, in terms of theories that apologize for fast capitalism, it still takes the biscuit.

Endnotes

1. According to William H. Gass's introduction to The Recognitions (page viii).

2. For an excellent discussion of the totality in the context of Marxism see Martin Jay's Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas (1986).

3. For a full discussion of the dividual in this context see Williams Volume 1.1.

4. In his essay "Photography", Kracauer describes how the face of their grandmother as a young girl appears to her grandchildren "The smiles of mannequins in beauty parlors are just as rigid and perpetual" (1995:48), whilst in "The Hotel Lobby" he describes its denizens thus: "Remnants of individuals slip into the nirvana of relaxation, faces disappear behind newspapers, and the artificial continuous light illuminates nothing but mannequins" (ibid:183).

5. See Levin's footnote 1 pg 354 in Kracauer (1995)

6. This is a prescient and cogent description of the pervasive reach of bio-politics in such new forms as Reality TV.

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"Second Nature": Advertising, Metaphor and the Production of Space

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> It is in the town and not in the country, that 'terra incognita' needs to be written on our social maps.
> — Charles Booth [1891] (Cited in Leys and Old 1988, 192)

> All the time and space of his world become foreign to him with the accumulation of his alienated products. The spectacle is the map of this new world.
> — Guy Debord [1967] (1983, § 31)

In the wake of the 'spatial turn' in the social sciences and humanities, considerable attention has been devoted to the role that culture and ideology play in the production of space. "Interpretations and constructed images of reality," writes one well-known urban political economist, "are now just as important as any 'real' material reality, because these interpretations and images are diffused and accepted and become the bases on which people act: they become real .... They are ... as real as machines, material and buildings" (Storper cited in Soja 2000, 178). Sentiments such as these have been accompanied by an explosion of research into the spatial epistemologies, and especially the representation of cities, that take shape in a wide variety of media from art and literature to film, television and new information technologies. Writing about the relationship between cinema and space in the world-system, for instance, Fredric Jameson (1992) argues that mass culture always involves a secret striving to represent the totality of social space, "an unconscious, collective effort at trying to figure out where we are and what landscapes and forces confront us ..." (3). In particular, he privileges the 'narrative figurations' of fiction for their supple capacity to register and accommodate the pervasive anxieties and fears, hopes and desires that both produce and are produced by different spatial formations: their "very structure encourages a soaking up of whatever ideas in the air are left and a fantasy-solution to all the anxieties that rush to fill up our current vacuum" (4). Surprisingly, though, advertising—the one form of culture that has elevated the 'soaking up' of ideas and the provision of 'fantasy solutions' to a fine art—has received very little attention in the scholarly literature on space. Easily the most ubiquitous cultural phenomenon in late capitalist society (and, arguably, the master-narrative for all texts produced by a culture industry that increasingly conceives of itself first and foremost as a marketing device), advertising expresses and influences our spatial consciousness and imagination in a variety of ways. In the pages that follow, I want to offer a few speculative thoughts on the spatial epistemologies embedded within contemporary North American television ads and, in particular, explore how ads use nature as a metaphor to constitute space as an object of knowledge and a field of action.

Advertising as Spatial Epistemology

Critical accounts of the broader cultural and ideological significance of advertising (as opposed to the study of its success or failure in marketing specific goods or services) usually begin with the question of representation. What are the underlying patterns and consistencies that govern how advertisers portray various dimensions of our social

and natural world? The classic case, of course, is gender: countless studies have exhaustively documented how we are bombarded with idealized images of men and women that valorize certain attributes, values and forms of behavior while disparaging, marginalizing or excluding others. Mass diffusion of these stereotypes (and their replication in other forms of culture) has a profound impact upon the process of identity formation insofar as they furnish a set of cultural blueprints through which to understand, imagine, construct and experience ourselves as gendered subjects. The impulse to consume rises out of the gap between idealized image and everyday reality. After four decades of feminist consciousness-raising, activism and critique, this has become a familiar and transparent (if no less visceral or avoidable) logic. Conversely, the normative spatial archetypes that appear in the landscapes of advertising pass by virtually unnoticed, perceived (if at all) as little more than an idealized 'backdrop' designed to complement the favourable depiction of commodity or brand. More than simply serving as an innocent frame for the 'real' action, however, such representations feed into and reinforce an interlocking network of 'common sense' assumptions and beliefs that mediate our interaction with space.

Advertising is but one component of ideologies of space that incorporate a jumbled, heterogeneous and often contradictory mix of philosophical fragments and cultural myths, images and symbols, ideas and beliefs, rituals, institutions and practices. Crudely speaking, such ideologies operate at two inter connected levels. First, they give structure and form to how we experience space, furnishing the categories and concepts through which perception becomes knowledge and thereby legitimating certain forms of awareness and experience while precluding others. Second, they also produce maps of affect which regulate our capacity and desire to make emotional investments in space, shaping how and why certain types of space (or features of particular spaces) come to 'matter' to us in both positive and negative terms, while others are largely ignored. [2] Advertisers actively intervene in the processes by which knowledge and emotions take shape around space in order to position their goods and services—and consumption more broadly—as a means for people to both expand and intensify their capacity to experience space in a productive and pleasurable manner, as well as to minimize or ameliorate their exposure to less hospitable environments. Insofar as these maps of meaning and pleasure articulate with maps generated by other forms of culture, within other institutions or through other practices, powerful 'structures of feeling' are generated that normalize, naturalize and valorize certain ways of thinking, experiencing and dreaming about space. Most importantly in my view, these structures establish the epistemological conditions under which space becomes known either as a social product, subject to human knowledge and political regulation, or a natural entity that seemingly lies beyond our capacity to understand, let alone control.

In Landscapes of Capital, an innovative, extensive and wide-ranging discussion of contemporary television commercials, Robert Goldman, Stephen Papson and Noah Kersey (2003, 2005) argue that a new species of corporate advertising has emerged over the last decade or so which offers an idealized yet complex and multidimensional portrait of how time and space have been transformed by the 'information capitalism' of the twenty-first century. In promoting themselves (or, rather , their brand identities), corporate giants such as Microsoft, AT&T and General Electric now generate images and narratives that speak less to the features of any particular good or service and more to the virtues of capitalism itself as a revolutionary economic force that brings radical social, political and technological change in its wake. "Though any single commercial may lack the representational breadth to be considered a map, taken as a totality corporate commercials do constitute symbolic mappings of new time-space relations." On the one hand, the world is presented as a space of growing complexity, chaos and velocity, transformed by the spread of markets and new technologies into fluid, transnational networks of power, money, information, people and goods that circulate in uneven and unpredictable flows throughout the globe. Such an environment creates formidable challenges and even dangers for individuals and institutions accustomed to the more stable climate of the past. On the other hand, such changes are also portrayed as opening up tremendous opportunities for profit and success to those willing and able to adapt themselves to the exigencies of this new world order. Not surprisingly, the corporation is positioned as the crucial interlocutor here, a repository of the knowledge, skills and technology necessary for success in the unforgiving, hyper-competitive marketplace of today. Modernist fantasies of exercising absolute control over social space give way to a post-modernist proxy which transcribes raw discourses of power into the more refined language of data and information, positioning knowledge of space as the key to its profitable exploitation. A recent ad for United Parcel Services nicely encapsulates these themes: flying brown squares are superimposed upon a succession of urban landscapes in grid-like patterns, connoting the company's precision in mapping and coordinating the movement of objects through time and space [3].

"At 7:42 A.M. critical samples arrived at this pharmaceutical lab. At 9:34 A.M. a trade proposal arrived at the

National Congress in Brazil .... Who made all of these things happen? A company that delivers more packages on time than anyone." [4] Panoptic dreams of surveillance tied to the mapping of complex flows of commodities and information subsume the prospect of understanding social space beneath corporate objectives of productivity and efficiency, conceiving the production of spatial knowledge as a narrowly economic and technical affair, rather than a broader political and cultural project.

Goldman, Papson and Kersey perform an exemplary job of charting how the latent desire to see the 'landscapes and forces that confront us' is routinely channelled into benign and affirmative portraits of capitalism. Yet, as they readily admit, their examples are primarily drawn from ads for a limited range of services—finance, insurance, transportation (shipping), resource extraction, data processing, communication and travel—targeted first and foremost to business and economic elites. What about the more amorphous representations of space one finds within ads for consumer products that are directed at a much broader audience and which appear with much greater frequency and volume in our mass media? Moreover, advertising does more than provide deeply ideological explanations of what space is and how it should be organized: it also implicitly offers normative models of how we might orient ourselves towards and engage with our spatial surroundings. Introducing his pathbreaking work The Production of Space, Henri Lefebvre (1991) explains that "instead of emphasizing the rigorously formal aspect of codes [of representation], I shall instead be putting the stress on their dialectical character. Codes will be seen as part of a practical relationship, as part of an interaction between 'subjects' and their space and surroundings" (17-18). Along these lines, I would argue that more often than not the epistemological significance of any given ad lies not so much in how it represents space per se as in the condensed and often metaphorical account it provides of how space feels or ought to feel. Indeed, as Louis Althusser (1971) once famously suggested, "what is represented in ideology is ... not the system of real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of these individuals to the real relations in which they live" (155). Notwithstanding the many faults of structural Marxism, this maxim remains the most compelling articulation of the ideological logic that animates the culture industry and it is especially useful in theorizing the social and cultural effects of advertising. The task of denouncing the spectacular distortions of advertising, then, must be supplemented with a more speculative reckoning of how these distortions perform what Jameson (1990) calls, after the Freudian logic of the dream, 'transformational work' upon the real needs, feelings and experiences of people in order to ensure their expression, accommodation, satisfaction and management within the existing social order. In short, my argument is that the main cultural significance of the portrayal of space within advertising may lie less with the systematic representation (or misrepresentation) of 'real' space in a specific manner and more with the provision of metaphors and pedagogic narratives that sponsor the living of space in mythic and imaginary ways.

The most persistent spatial logic within advertising taken as a discursive field is the conceptual and affective division of space into two different types: privatized, household or 'inside' space that is both infinitely malleable (and therefore expressive of personal taste and social status) and subject to microscopic levels of control; and a much broader, nebulous category of 'outside' space that encompasses both social and natural environments. As noted above, this latter form of space harbors great potential for stimulating, exciting and pleasurable experiences, but at the same time appears inherently resistant to the possibility of 'cognitive mapping', and thus fundamentally ungovernable in any democratic sense of the term. The implications of such a division for a politics of space are profound. On the one hand, embryonic impulses to participate in the creation, construction and regulation of social space are channelled into the endless project of perfecting domestic space and rigorously patrolling its borders to ensure the systematic exclusion of anything that does not belong. While this epistemological formation (and associated patterns of spatial desire) largely takes shape around the personal space of the home, it also cultivates a latent xenophobia and appetite for spatial 'purity' that is easily mobilized in support of a politics of surveillance, discipline and control (e.g. The Patriot Act, 'cleaning' up city streets through aggressive policing, etc). It installs and reinforces a spatial imaginary in which it becomes difficult to conceive of the 'perfection' of space without the liquidation of that which does not fit. This desire for stability and control, however, has in many ways become little more than a defensive, rearguard action in a world that appears to have become profoundly unknowable and uncontrollable. Accordingly, advertisers couple fantasies of domestic utopia with narratives that speak to the intellectual stimulation and aesthetic invigoration that can accrue when we seek extraordinary 'outside' spaces that seemingly enable novel forms of experience. In fact, our capacity to take pleasure from such spaces becomes—in important ways—dependent upon the extent to which it is 'alien' to us, filled with mysterious properties that can disrupt the routines and expectations that otherwise dominate our everyday interaction with space. Put simply, not

only do images of space in advertising compromise our capacity to understand space as socially and historically constituted, they teach us that our enjoyment of it is inversely proportional to its lucidity: spectacle—the 'time and space of [our] world become foreign to [us]'—becomes the preeminent signifier of the capacity of space to produce meaningful, enjoyable and memorable experience.

'Just Passing Through': Mobility, Vision and Space

Surveying any and all aspects of how this logic takes shape in television advertising would be a truly exhaustive (and probably futile) enterprise given the volume and diversity of commercials. Consequently, our primary focus will be ads for automobiles, [5] a useful area to examine for a couple of reasons. First, automotive advertising has been consistently understudied in the field of critical advertising scholarship despite the fact that promotional spending in this sector consistently dwarfs all other categories [6]. Second, and more important for this project, no other sector devotes as much time and energy to depicting the relationship between individuals and space, in large part because no other commodity or technology has exercised as great an influence over the (re)ordering of our built environments and spatial imaginaries during the twentieth century. It will come as little surprise that the most powerful, compelling and persistent narratives in auto advertising have little to do with either price or the functional qualities of particular vehicles or brands. Instead, they take shape in the constellation of mobility, space and freedom. The (con)fusion of technology and politics has always been among the most significant features of consumer society, a dynamic that mass 'automobility' and the promotional fields woven around it have played no small part in championing over the last eighty or so years. Movement through space is positioned as a concrete, material realization of freedom, a visceral and exhilarating experience that lends a physical, tangible quality to a political virtue that all too often remains disappointingly abstract or formal. "The private automobile represents freedom, opportunity and possibilities," writes Kevin Smith (2002), Editor in Chief of Car and Driver, the leading consumer oriented automotive magazine in North America. "It has had more impact on the human experience than any other invention of its time .... Being able to go somewhere, individually and independently, opens up the world" (17). An editorial in The Economist similarly champions the automobile as "the greatest mobile force for freedom in the rich democracies" (Cited in Freund and Martin 1993, 82). What are the implications of such sentiments—as they are channelled by and through the advertising industry—upon the epistemologies that mediate our understanding, perception and experience of space? How do they affect the (re)presentation of space in television commercials? Two themes strike me as especially significant in this regard.

First, notwithstanding the intense fetishizing of domestic space I noted above, the 'outside' spaces that have the potential to interest, excite and stimulate us are those to which we must travel, rather than those in which we spend our everyday lives. While it is doubtful that many believe in the literal reality of the mythic dreamscapes constructed by advertisers, such images inaugurate and sustain forms of spatial desire for spectacular locations that can overwhelm the senses and fire the imagination. Dreaming about space takes the form of going somewhere else rather than (re)imagining the relatively mundane spaces of the familiar. "Tell better stories," tempts an ad for Nissan Pathfinder, showing a middle aged couple regaling their dinner guests with a tale about how they came to possess a hawk feather framed upon their wall.

> **Our trip, we load up our new Nissan Pathfinder and head out. Make camp. Unmake camp. Get a better idea. Get lost. Get found. Jump in a lake. Jump out of the lake. We keep driving. Watch four movies. Come across this family and give them a ride. Well the father turns out to be this Navajo healing man and soon we're around this fire and they give us this hawk feather. We drive home without touching a freeway and get back just as we run out of CDs ... Broccoli?** [7]

A visual montage with twenty-four distinct edits in less than twenty seconds accompanies the story. As trivial or ridiculous as ads like this might be, they nevertheless shape our expectations about the potential of different types of space to provide physical, intellectual and emotional gratification; more to the point, they invite us to conceptualize privatized mobility as the best (and only) strategy for changing the role of space in our lives from a banal, unremarkable and even constraining force into a resource for excitement, stimulation and empowerment.

Countless variations of this basic message romanticize a nomadic sensibility, counseling that if we want to experience places that will awaken our curiousity and intellect, invigorate our senses, improve our social and spiritual well-being and create new opportunities for friendship, intimacy and personal growth, then travel to new,

exotic and unfamiliar spaces is obviously the best strategy. The relationship between agency, autonomy and space is reconfigured around narratives of mobility, speed and escape as compared to thicker, deeper or more grounded forms of spatial agency based in the democratic construction and governance of existing social and public spaces. Measured against the dreamworlds of promotional culture and exciting experiences they appear to make possible, the spaces of our neighborhoods and communities appear diminished and unremarkable, unlikely sites for the investment of utopian energies needed to energize a truly radical and transformative spatial politics. Utopia—the good place—thus also remains 'no place', that which we might dream about finding elsewhere, but never something that we might collectively design or build ourselves. Automakers commonly depict automobiles passing through fantastic, otherworldly landscapes filled with remarkable sights and sounds. In an ad for Mitsubishi, for instance, a young woman drives through an imaginary underwater environment populated by exotic sea creatures and a futuristic submarine, her eyes filled with wonder. "Where will the Colt take you?" [8] A more dystopian vision from Acura sets the automobile's passage through an ominous—almost apocalyptic—landscape of storms, tidal waves and urban desolation to a gothic electronic beat.

The specific characteristics of such fantastic environments matter less than the shared orientation to space modeled again and again by the human subjects in these ads: space becomes noteworthy insofar as it offers a collection of visual delights designed to enchant and entertain. The familiarity of the environments we know best, precisely because they breed a certain level of comfort and predictability, become an index of their quotidian status as differentiated from the novel, monumental and spectacular features of space dramatized by advertisers, features that ultimately become a pre-requisite for space to attract our attention and desire.

The second theme that clusters around the promotional discourse of automobility is a phenomenology of perception that privileges the visual characteristics of space. As Wolfgang Schivelbusch notes in his oft-cited study of railway travel in the nineteenth century, the preeminence of vision is intimately related to speed. Travel through landscapes at increasing velocities in self-contained vehicles generates a fundamental disjuncture between travellers and the world outside, elevating the visual faculty as the preeminent and architectonic sense through which one experiences space. "Panoramic perception, in contrast to traditional perception, no longer belonged to the same space as the perceived objects: the traveller saw the objects, landscapes, through the apparatus that moved him through the world" (Cited in Goldman, Papson and Kersey 2003). Television ads, especially those for automobiles, consistently replicate this form of perception, positioning the visual characteristics of space as the principle features through which it becomes intelligible, meaningful and emotionally significant. Special effects, for example, are more prevalent in advertising than in virtually all other media (with the possible exception of videogames) and are primarily used to convey ideas, meanings, values and emotions in a condensed, shorthand fashion through visual means. In an ad for Jaguar, for instance, lingering close-ups that lovingly trace the smooth curves and polished chrome of the vehicle not only define it as an object of sexual desire—the commercial is entitled 'Lust' after one of the seven deadly sins—but, more importantly, invite us to privilege the literal fetishization of commodities as a source of erotic pleasure [9].

Techniques of graphic reproduction take on epistemological significance in terms of how they code certain landscapes, features of space or modes of spatial engagement as meaningful or emotionally significant in particular ways.

Among the battery of tactics regularly used by advertisers, the quick-cut is probably the most common (though rarely noticed) effect one finds in television commercials. Most thirty second ads, for instance, will have ten to fifteen distinct edits, each involving either a shift in visual perspective or the portrayal of an entirely different location. At one level, such fragmentation is little more than a crude device for securing the attention of the viewer. But it also has deeper implications in terms of privileging a particular mode of interaction between space and subject. A brisk montage of images suggests that the car, and by extension, rapid movement is the key that can literally translate space into a phenomena that is visually interesting, aesthetically complex and even physically exhilarating. The volume, scale and dynamism of visual stimuli that any given place can supply are surreptitiously positioned as the features most likely to motivate and attract our interest, attention and enthusiasm. At a more abstract level, though, the intense visual fragmentation of most auto ads convey both an expression of spatial disorientation—a sense that the complexity and velocity of our environment makes it virtually impossible to understand and locate ourselves within time and space— and the simultaneous enchantment or aestheticization of such disorientation as an opportunity for spectacular forms of consumption that proceed via the emancipation of the visual fragment from its placement within a meaningful structure or totality. Visual stimulation thereby serves as a form of ocular compensation for cognitive disorientation. Radical shifts in perspective and location as the camera effortlessly dives

around the commodity, zooming in for a close-up in one moment, pulling back for a wide panning shot in the next, offer an experience of space in multiple dimensions. Yet the utopian power of the camera to penetrate deeply into the tissue of space stands in inverse proportion to the advertisement's willingness to offer up any secrets of the commodity or the landscape in which it is embedded: instead, their history, the social, political and economic conditions under which they were produced remain unacknowledged.

Spectacle displaces intelligible totality. The quantity and quality of visual stimuli that advertising injects into representations of space, the meticulously crafted 'perfection' such simulations embody and the perpetual excitement, happiness and awe they generate in the actors who inhabit them creates a compelling web of associations between space, spectacle and human gratification. What kinds of spaces do we need, want or dream about? The power of advertising lies not in the provision of any definitive answer, but rather in tilting the scale clearly in favor of those that can satisfy (and stimulate) a thirst for scopic pleasure. Given the limits imposed by the thirty second spot, advertising has grown reliant upon highly stylized and iconic representations of space that are instantly recognizable, eliciting certain ideas, values or feelings, as well as making an immediate and strong impression upon the viewer, creating a highly charged cultural space in which to embed the product, brand or message. Irrespective of the content of those spaces, the television commercial demands, and therefore normalizes, strategies of perception in which our capacity to classify, comprehend and enjoy space (or its representation) depends upon the extent to which it furnishes visual cues that are, on the one hand, relatively straightforward to recognize and identify but, on the other hand, sufficiently spectacular and 'eye-catching' in terms of scale, intensity and dynamism to merit our interest and attention.

'It's a Jungle Out There': From Society to Nature and Back Again [10]

Since the emergence of the automobile as a mass commodity in the early twentieth century, natural themes and imagery have been used to flesh out and concretize these two principles of spatial epistemology—the pursuit of spatial novelty and a spatial phenomenology that privileges spectacle—by attaching a utopian flavor to movement through space. "We shall solve the city problem," Henry Ford once quipped, "by leaving the city" (Cited in Flink 1988, 139). From the 1920s onward, car advertising has invoked the fantasy of leaving behind the constraints of a crowded, mundane and polluted urban environment for the wide open spaces offered by nature. Charting the evolution of automotive promotional discourse, Andrew Wernick (1991) argues that the reliance upon natural imagery intensified in the 1970s and 1980s as people grew disenchanted with technology (and its militaristic overtones) and expressed concerns over growing traffic congestion, energy consumption and road construction (77-79). Among the easiest tactics for advertisers wishing to deflect the negative associations invoked by the car was, and remains, an image-based rearticulation of cars with nature. For both producers and consumers, the association of automobiles with (travel to) pristine natural environments helps to forget the vast resources and infrastructure required to support car-based societies as well as the enormous ecological consequences that accompany their mass production. In an American context, the use of natural imagery also taps deeply into core national myths. Thomas Jefferson, for example, famously idealized the authenticity and moral supremacy of life in the country, an idea that has been replayed in countless texts and venues over the past two centuries in which a redemptive arc is traced from the corruption of the city to the honesty, virtue and community of the small town. Frederick Jackson Turner's 'frontier thesis', which has become deeply embedded in popular culture (if somewhat discredited in academic scholarship) traces a similar trajectory in defining the essential strength and vigour of U.S. moral character and democracy as a product of the struggle to carve a new life out of the wilderness and, conversely, suggesting the likely atrophy of such virtues in an urban environment. The recent popularity of sentimental and often melancholy tributes to the declining role that nature plays in everyday life, best expressed perhaps in Bill McKibben's bestsellers The End of Nature (1989) and The Age of Missing Information (1992), confirm the ongoing purchase that this dream of escaping the city for the sensual bliss of nature continues to hold on the popular imagination.

The flight from urban to natural space looms large in automobile ads of today, ranging from the carefully crafted stories of big budget national campaigns to generic footage of vehicles racing through natural landscapes that populate spots for local dealers. Cities or, more accurately, the monotonous routines that often seem to dominate urban and suburban existence are regularly targeted by advertisers. A typical ad for Saab, for instance, paints an Orwellian portrait of social life as characterized by endless sameness: row upon row of identical suburban homes, identical suitcases on an airport trolley, identical office cubicles, identical dresses in a clothing store and, lastly,

identical black sedans in a parking garage. Puzzled, confused and disoriented, the commercial's protagonists shuffle about aimlessly in a bland, urban dystopia of complete homogeneity. Finally, salvation arrives in the form of a silver Saab convertible that offers its young driver the opportunity to stand out from the crowd. As the growl of its engine mixes with the chorus 'I'm free' sung by The Who, the vehicle slowly pulls out of a parking garage, leaving a stunned onlooker speechless with wonder. "In a world of sameness, you can still maintain your identity." [11] It is a familiar refrain, duplicated ad nauseam since marketers discovered the counterculture in the 1960s, yet still a popular formula in marketing discourse.

The flip side of this denigration of urban life is the idealization of nature (and the technology to get us 'there') as the antidote to the mind-numbing boredom of daily life. Invoking nature as the endpoint of vehicular travel confirms the belief that spatial mobility can offer access to places, experiences and events that are fundamentally different. Escape to someplace else is both possible and desirable, offering an emancipation from the tyranny of the everyday. A Honda ad begins with the archetype of a normal, ordinary, even generic man rising from his bed, brushing his teeth, kissing his wife goodbye and working in an office. A deep imprint in his mattress, worn footprints in front of the sink, the outline of his lips on his wife's cheek and the deep grooves his office chair has worn into the carpet reveal that each action has been performed in precisely the same way, countless times before. The accompanying piano melody is slow and banal to the point of being tedious. Then, as he leaves work, our latter-day Sisyphus stops, looks up, and sees a black Honda Pilot with a powerboat in tow. Entranced, he steps off a path worn deep into the ground, the spell of the commodity shattering his imprisonment within the spaces of the everyday. Drums pounding, a rock soundtrack cranks up as images of our hero and his excited family driving through the great outdoors pass across the screen. The spiritual death of comfortable life in city and suburb give way to the adventurous exploration of a wilderness environment [12]. A pair of ads for Jeep and Acura follow the same pattern in terms of contrasting the virtues of nature as compared to the ills of the city. Both begin with images of peaceful travel through spectacular wilderness terrain, the scenery accompanied by soothing, peaceful melodies. Abruptly, nature vanishes and we find the vehicles are actually mired in traffic gridlock, the wilderness imagery but a dream. "The Jeep Liberty makes you feel like you're in the middle of nowhere ... even when you're not" while Acura informs us that, with respect to its SUV, "its heart is in the right place ... even when you're not." [13]

The virtuous character and restorative powers of natural landscapes are invariably linked to their awe-inspiring visual features, the second epistemological principle discussed earlier. Nature's value and significance grows in proportion to the extent that it can be perceived and consumed in a spectacular fashion: indeed, the ease with which such wilderness locales can be sharply and quickly differentiated from more prosaic locations is precisely what makes them so attractive to advertisers. Nissan, for instance, lifts the energetic chorus from British rock band Stereophonics's hit 'High as a Ceiling'—'find my way, free my soul, eyes wide open'—and layers it over images of kayakers, cross-country runners and alpine snowboarders hurtling through isolated wilderness terrain, symbolizing the Xterra's capacity to partner with nature in the invigoration of human bodies. [14] One might reasonably object that depictions of intense physical activity, in fact, challenge the hegemony of vision by promoting the pleasures of a visceral, embodied and 'direct' engagement with the environment, valorising a 'pure', 'raw' and sensual experience of natural space that both relies upon and stimulates each and every human sense (as compared to the sensory deprivation that, it is implied, characterizes life in the city). Yet the key that unlocks such an experience is almost always the visual splendour of the natural landscape. It is not the activity per se, but the prospect of doing it amidst such breathtaking scenery that constitutes the underlying logic of these types of ads. Signifiers of nature become emblematic of the pursuit of spectacular visual experience that dominates our perceptions and expectations of space.

In an award-winning spot for Volkswagen, for instance, a young couple—smiling beatifically at one another—are shown scaling mountain trails in their SUV in order to take a snapshot of the panoramic vista at the summit for a senior citizen who eagerly awaits their return in the parking lot [15].

Two recent ads for the new Jeep Commander showcase a similar sensibility. In the first one, we hear children react with awe and amazement as a school of sharks swims overhead: slowly, the camera pulls back to reveal the 'Command View' skylights as the SUV emerges from its underwater sight-seeing excursion. "That was cool," concludes a boy in the backseat. [16] The second opens with footage of a nature documentary running on the jeep's DVD player: "Virtually inaccessible, the remote northern territory is a fortress of alpine peeks, the terrain so brutal, its beauty has seldom been seen by human eyes. Only the most adventuresome have ever set foot in this desolate yet picturesque landscape." Again, a slow camera pan shows that the vehicle is actually parked on a mountain peak in

the very same territory described in the documentary. Seven friends admire the awe-inspiring views of snowcapped mountains and densely forested valleys as one nonchalantly suggests "this is much better than the movie".

Both commercials conclude with the tagline: "It's your world. Take command." [17] This martial injunction plainly refers not to physical or proprietary control over space nor to the simple mastery of nature for our own ends but instead models a form of spatial agency based on the pursuit of visual stimulation, the art of cleverly positioning oneself in the right place at the right time, thereby maximizing one's 'subjection' to an array of spectacular environments and events.

At one level, explaining the appeal of natural imagery as a marketing device (and the ideological implications that flow from such rhetorical strategies) is not especially difficult. As Kate Soper (1995) explains, "the societies that have most abused nature have also perennially applauded its ways over those of 'artifice', have long valued its health and integrity over the decadence of human contrivance, and today employ pastoral imagery as the most successful of conventions to enhance the profits on everything from margarine to motor cars" (150). The semiotic economy that governs promotional culture ensures that the most highly prized marketing slogans and signifiers are those that enable people to symbolically distance and differentiate themselves from conventional, 'mainstream' forms of social life. Scarcity breeds value, and the more difficult it becomes to 'experience' nature (or places that are culturally sanctified as relatively untouched by human activity), the more appealing natural signifiers become as a means of distinction. "In virtually all its manifestations," notes William Cronon (1995), "wilderness represents a flight from history" (79). As city streets and suburban neighbourhoods give way to the rugged, epic and timeless beauty of landscapes seemingly untouched by humanity, one can fantasize about escaping the collected ills and burdens of history, society and civilization. Such narratives reduce the complexities and interdependence of nature and history to mutually exclusive spatial archetypes, inviting us to believe that they are entirely separate and distinct from each other and, most importantly, that the automobile can effortlessly spirit one between them. When nature and history face off in the Manichean narratives favoured by promotional culture, the former always wins; not because its signifiers are inherently more attractive or appealing, but because such contests fix and freeze space into an assortment of essentialist configurations, the attributes of any given space predetermined by how it fits into a simplistic framework of primitive archetypes. Not only is urban space demonized in a host of predictable ways, but, more dangerously, urban ills that have an eminently social and historical origin—congestion, smog, suburban sprawl, urban poverty, crime and so on—are naturalized as inevitable features of urban life, reinforcing personalized flight as the only viable and realistic solution to, as Ford put it, the 'problem' of the city.

But are the ideological effects of nature in automobile advertising exhausted by its capacity to serve as a utopian foil to life in the city? A sanctuary from the monotony, boredom and sameness of the everyday? A privileged site for the (re)awakening of body and soul to primordial forms of experience? An escapist distraction and retreat from a more substantive and rational engagement with both the potential and the problems of urban space? It is, without question, all of these things some of the time. But I would argue it is also something more. Writing about the fantasies of Hollywood in the 1930s and 1940s, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno (1993) warned that "the escape from everyday drudgery which the whole culture industry promises may be compared to the daughter's abduction in the cartoon: the father is holding the ladder in the dark" (142). A similar logic is at play in the stories and images of advertising. On the one hand, natural signifiers facilitate the clustering of utopian desires for difference, escape and the renovation of experience around the promotional narratives of automobility. On the other, those signifiers also serve as highly potent metaphors for the transcription of existing forms of spatial experience into a mythic form. Just as the distortions of the dream help to accommodate the expression and 'management' of wishes and anxieties that would otherwise be repressed, images of nature can similarly solicit the (distorted) expression of popular hopes and fears about social space.

"The alienated city," notes Jameson, "is above all a space in which people are unable to map (in their minds) either their own position or the urban totality" (Cited in Freund and Martin, 107). Given the exponential rate at which time and space have been compressed over the last three decades, it is tempting to explain this collective disorientation as a phenomena of recent origin, symptomatic of the growing complexity and interdependence of virtually all aspects of social life. Certainly the expansion and intensification of capitalist social relations, euphemistically described as globalization, have drawn all parts of the world—in one way or another—into hyper-dynamic networks of production, exchange and consumption that have become virtually impossible to map or even conceptualize from moment to moment. The penetration of the commodity form into all aspects of daily life brings even the smallest and most trivial activities, objects and spaces under the sway of vast social, economic and political forces that literally

escape representation (except, perhaps, in the most caricatured of forms). Yet our detachment and isolation, at both a conceptual and practical level, from the processes, relations and institutions that govern our world is not merely a formulaic correlate of their increasing scale, fluidity and scope. Instead, it is compounded by the social logic of alienation Karl Marx (1978) discerned in the commodification of labour over a century and a half ago. "The alienation of the worker in his product means not only that his labour becomes an object, an external existence, but that it exists outside him, independently, as something alien to him, and that it becomes a power of its own confronting him; it means that the life he has conferred on the object confronts him as something hostile and alien" (72). As the commodity form spreads beyond the labour process, subsuming more and more use-values under the principle of exchange, this experience of alienation becomes generalized throughout capitalist society. Integrating Weber's sobering and largely pessimistic account of instrumental rationality's 'iron cage' with Marx's analysis of alienation, Georg Lukacs (1990) argues that reification—the petrification of social relations and historical processes into things—robs people of the capacity (and the will) to understand and engage with their world as the product of collective human activity. Instead, seemingly helpless in the face of forces that defy comprehension and control, passive forms of knowledge and activity become normalized.

In spatial terms, reification has deep implications for the epistemologies that mediate how we conceptualize and experience our social and material environments. In particular, as the logic of commodification spreads, so too does the collective amnesia spawned by the separation of people from the conditions and practices through which social space is produced. We literally 'forget' that the spaces in which we dwell are the product of social and historical forces and thereby subject to some measure of democratic regulation. Instead, as Lukacs (1990) observes, human beings "erect around themselves in the reality they have created and 'made', a kind of second nature which evolves with exactly the same inexorable necessity as was the case earlier on with irrational forces of nature ..." (128, emphasis added). In recent years, the concept of second nature has proven remarkably fertile in deconstructing how what we tend to think of as purely 'natural' has, in fact, been socially produced. [18] What is less often explored, however, is the appeal and use of nature as a metaphor to express the affective dimensions of capitalist experience. Indeed, it is precisely this expressive relationship between economy and culture that fascinated Walter Benjamin (1999) in his famous study of the Parisian Arcades: "the economic conditions under which society exists are expressed in the superstructure—precisely as, with the sleeper, an overfull stomach finds not its reflection but its expression in the contents of dreams ..." (392, emphasis added). Much of his work involved a meticulous investigation into how experiences of alienation in a city being reshaped by the logic of capital were expressed in the popular culture of the day. Among the most interesting literary fragments collected in The Arcades Project are those that press natural motifs into metaphorical service in the articulation of such alienation. "Cities, like forests," writes Victor Hugo, "have their dens in which all their vilest and most terrible monsters hide" (415). Or Honore Balzac: "The poetry of terror which the stratagems of enemy tribes at war create in the heart of the forests of America, and of which Cooper has made such good use, was attached to the smallest details of Parisian life" (442). Lastly, from Charles Baudelaire, "Man ... is always ... in a state of savagery. What are the perils of the jungle and prairie compared to the daily shocks and conflicts of civilization? Whether a man embraces his dupe on the boulevard, or spears his prey in unknown forests, is he not ... the most highly perfected beast of prey?" (443). Fascinated with Benjamin's remapping of nineteenth century Paris as a primeval, phantasmagoric landscape in which humanity once again slumbered under the spell of myth and nature, Horkheimer and Adorno (1993) developed this constellation of ideas as one of the principle organizing motifs of Dialectic of Enlightenment: "It is as if," they write, "the final result of civilization were a return to the terrors of nature" (113).

It is an idea that the copywriters and creative directors of Madison Avenue have taken as their own. Television commercials that present natural forces as unpredictable and dangerous have become increasingly common in the field of auto advertising. Among the most memorable variant on this theme appears in a recent spot for Acura. Accompanied by an ominous cinematic soundtrack, a silver SUV slowly makes its way through a dense forest shrouded in mist. Suddenly, in Tolkienesque fashion, the trees and shrubs come alive, attacking the vehicle with root, branch and hurled boulders. Dodging and weaving the relentless assault, the SUV finally races into the safety of an open field just ahead of the grasping claws of the predatory forest. "Because you never know what nature might throw at you," explains the narrator. [19]

An equally magical sequence for Lexus depicts an angry wind god vainly trying to blow the luxury car off the road. [20] Volvo depicts a diver protected from an aggressive great white shark by a distinctive, car-shaped cage. [21] While Toyota regularly deploys blissful images of a peaceful nature in order to promote its line of hybrids, it offers a

very different vision of nature in its ads for trucks. One commercial, for instance, cycles through images of natural disaster—floods, mud slides, tornadoes, earthquakes, forest fires and so on—noting that "whatever gets thrown at them, people all over the world rely on Toyota trucks to make it through". [22]

In a somewhat lighter vein, a second uses faux home movie footage that shows a pick-up survive a direct hit from a meteor, its occupants howling with delight after the impact. [23] A Jeep driver on an ocean causeway rolls to a stop as a massive tree suddenly falls out of a blue sky, blocking the road. After a moment or two, he calmly drives over the trunk and continues on his way: the Wrangler Rubicon is "engineered for the unexpected". [24] Images of a ferocious and unpredictable nature are, of course, ideal for dramatizing an automobile's capacity to protect its occupants from inclement driving conditions as well as master the roughest terrain. However, I would argue such narratives have broader (if unintended) effects upon how we conceptualize and understand the world that lies outside. Among the many attractions of nature—in all of its many guises from terrifying to serene—to advertisers is its seemingly boundless capacity to accommodate the felicitous projection, expression and aestheticization of our thoughts and feelings about social space, from utopian dreams about environments that can delight, inspire and amaze to dystopian nightmares of frightening and dangerous spaces that threaten our safety, security and well-being.

Aestheticizing Reification: Epistemologies of the Sublime

Fear, incomprehension, spectacle, metaphor and nature bring us to the conceptual terrain of the sublime. While the diversity of phenomena that have attracted the label 'sublime' have multiplied in recent years, [25] it is fair to say that natural environments remain the dominant archetype when it comes to thinking through experiences of the sublime. For Edmund Burke, such experiences come "upon us in the gloomy forest, in the howling wilderness, in the form of the lion, the tiger, the panther or rhinocerous" (Cited in Hitt 1999, 605). In The Critique of Judgement, Immanuel Kant divides sublime experience into two variants: the mathematical, generated by natural landscapes of vast magnitude and unfathomable scale; and the dynamic, in which one confronts the power and ferocity of uncontrollable natural forces. Of the latter, for instance, he writes:

> At the moment of the sublime, we measure ourselves against the apparent almightiness of nature .... Bold, overhanging, and, as it were, threatening rocks, thunder-clouds piled up the vault of heaven, borne along with flashes and peals, volcanoes in all their violence of destruction, hurricanes leaving desolation in their track, the boundless ocean rising with rebellious force, the high waterfall of some mighty river, and the like, make our power of resistance a trifling moment in comparison with their might (ibid).

The sublime, then, is generated by environments of terrifying power and immensity over which human beings exercise neither control nor understanding; facing them, we grapple with a visceral experience of ourselves as inconsequential and insignificant when set against the totality of the overwhelming and unpredictable forces of nature. In the Romantic cultural sensibilities of the nineteenth century, echoes of which resound in contemporary environmental consciousness as well as the commodified 'New Age' spiritualism of late capitalism, nature marks the boundaries and outer limits of human reason and control. In its most progressive guise, sublime experience marks a humbling revolt of the senses against imperialist Enlightenment and capitalist narratives that define nature as little more than raw material to be studied, transformed and exploited in the satisfaction of (narrowly conceived) human needs and interests.

Yet as many commentators have observed, sublime experience ends with neither terror nor abjection, but more ambiguously with a mixture of fear, joy and delight, and its end result is often an invigorated and even empowered subject. In The Romantic Sublime, Thomas Weiskel (1976) argues that the sublime unfolds over three successive stages or moments. First, that which we perceive is fundamentally in accord with our intellectual faculties: there is an underlying harmony or congruence between the impressions of our senses and our capacity to give them meaning. In the second, this "habitual relation of mind and object" comes to a sudden end before an image, idea, sensation or experience that exceeds our understanding: we are confronted with a space or phenomena that is literally incomprehensible. The final moment involves a restoration of meaning through an intellectual sleight of hand: our lack of knowledge itself assumes deeper significance as expressive of a privileged communion with a transcendent and otherwise unimaginable other (22-25). Via the semiotic alchemy performed by the sublime, absence of meaning (or, more properly, experience of an object that overflows and disturbs the process of making sense)

becomes the foundation for deeper forms of meaning laden with affect. For Kant, the ultimate victor in this process is reason itself and, by association, the subject which passes through and beyond fear and self-doubt to invoke its faculties of aesthetic judgement in the extraction of meaning from the experience. Nature's overwhelming sensual, material presence becomes grist for the conceptual and aesthetic mill that is the transcendental ego. Momentary loss or displacement of that ego in initial moments of fear and disorientation ensure that its eventual return, and accompanying sentiments of mastery, will be all the more pleasurable and enduring.

Experiencing natural space as sublime depends upon the preeminence of the visual faculty and the associated transformation of nature into spectacle. At one level, the attributes of sublime landscapes—scale and/or power—are most effectively triggered through visual cues. The vast emptiness and unfathomable depths of the open ocean, for instance, or the destructive power of an earthquake or volcanic eruption are simply inconceivable without a strong visual presence. More importantly, though, faced by a transcendent, unknowable and often threatening 'otherness', onlookers can train themselves to (re)experience such spaces in spectacular form by cultivating a posture of contemplative detachment from both natural phenomena and the visceral reaction of terror and fear they might otherwise generate. Accenting the visual features of space, then, becomes simultaneously constitutive and reflective of a posture of self-mastery in the face of that which one cannot control or understand. This is no mere intellectual process or act of individual willpower. The sublime is not merely an aesthetic logic, but a social and historical one insofar as it is predicated upon increasing isolation, detachment and protection from environments that threaten human safety and security. Prior to the eighteenth century, for instance, natural spaces attracted little veneration in the European West: wild forests, swamps and mountains were, for the most part, viewed as inhospitable and dangerous, to be avoided wherever possible (Macnaghten and Urry 1998, 114). The transformation of nature into an object of aesthetic judgement—in which disinterested contemplation replaces more immediate (and instrumental) attention to how it might both sustain and threaten human life—was a luxury reserved for a select few who could afford such 'independence' from their environment. Excavating the historic and social origins of this logic in the 'Grand Tour' of European elites (a voyage involving passage through the Alps en route to the cultural treasures of the Italian peninsula), Gene Ray (2004) argues that the capacity to experience the sublime was heavily dependent upon social class:

> To be able to find pleasure in avalanches and fissured glacier fields sets English nobles and bourgeois travelers on the Grand Tour apart from Swiss peasants for whom such natural features are a despised daily danger. The rich on vacation can be moved to a pleasurable awe by the sight of a storm at sea; the fisherman and sailor know otherwise .... In a revealing moment of the Critique of Judgment, Kant would acknowledge that the sublime presupposes the possession of a certain "culture," that it indeed requires more culture than the beautiful: the sublime is thus a more exclusive taste—a more expensive distinction (7).

The sublime, in other words, evolves as a privileged cultural and intellectual strategy for not only managing anxiety when confronted with powerful and dangerous forces beyond one's control, but also as a means of transforming experiences of fear and helplessness into opportunities for aesthetic gratification and the accumulation of cultural capital.

In a fascinating study of American naturalist fiction from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Christophe Den Tandt (1998) argues that the rhetoric of the sublime was gradually appropriated by authors who sought to express the perceptual disorientation that frequently characterized people's encounter with urban space. Fiction of this period featured two distinct spatial epistemologies and corresponding descriptive styles: on the one hand, realist discourse strove for a transparent accounting and explanation of social and material conditions; on the other, an emerging natural idiom relied upon a fertile mixture of metaphor, allegory and romantic fantasy to give expression to human experiences that (seemingly) lay beyond more traditional forms of narrative description (3-51). Note, for example, the "gothic and oceanic tropes" that dominate Theodor Dreiser's account of metropolitan experience in the turn-of-the-century novel Sister Carrie:

> She was again the victim of the city's hypnotic influence, the subject of the mesmeric operations of super-intelligible forces. We have heard of the strange power of Niagara, the contemplation of whose rushing flood leads to thoughts of dissolution. We have heard of the influence of the hypnotic ball, a scientific fact. Man is too intimate with the drag of unexplainable, invisible forces to doubt longer that the human mind is colored, moved, swept on by things which neither resound nor speak. The waters of the sea are not the only things which the moon sways (Cited in Den Tandt, 40).

Refusing typical accounts of these two discursive forms as distinct genres, he theorizes their uneasy coexistence

within tests of this period as symptomatic of an emerging cultural and intellectual sensibility that the scale and pace of urbanization was rendering cities increasingly unintelligible as a form of social space. The documentary style of realism was well-suited to the exploration of the 'knowable communities' and 'familiar worlds' of family, neighbourhood, workplace and small town. However, attempts to describe the metropolis itself as a coherent totality and, above all, to register how such a complex, multi-faceted and 'monumental' environment was experienced by individuals defied conventional, realist modes of description and explanation.

In this latter case, romantic metaphors and allegories were used to construct the 'urban sublime', a series of interlocking rhetorical tropes that both signify the impossibility of grasping the totality of metropolitan existence and turn such recognition into an occasion for wonder and delight at the marvellous spectacle in which (some) city dwellers find themselves.

> The function of the rhetoric of sublimity is, first, to give utterance to the writer's doubts about the very possibility of portraying the city as a totality comprehensible in human terms; simultaneously, in an act of rhetorical substitution, the sublime fills the epistemological and existential void of the city's fragmentation by producing its pseudo-synthesis of the urban field ... the totalizing representation thus created is a metaphorical token for the unrepresentable object—in this case, the whole of city life (39).

Drawing upon Weiskel's semiotic reformulation of the sublime, Den Tandt locates the origin of sublime experience in a state of perceptual confusion motivated by a sudden surplus of signifiers, as when immersed in an environment with a surplus of sensory stimulation: the semiotic flood simply overflows our capacity to give it meaning. Resolution of this crisis is achieved through the use of metaphor by which the experience of confusion and disorientation is given meaning as expressive of transcendent forces beyond human ken. Metaphor, then, constitutes the "ideological fulcrum of the sublime ... it provides the subject with a pseudo-totalizing view of his or her universe that is epistemologically more manageable than the supposedly unrepresentable object of terror and fascination first evoked by sublime discourse" (40). Not surprisingly, among the favored metaphorical tokens adopted to restore meaning to urban spaces, however mythic in form, were those drawn from the vitalist discourses of social Darwinism, conceiving the city as a vast, mysterious and spectacular reservoir of instinctual energies and pseudo-natural forces (33-43). Images of nature become, then, not the cause of sublime experience, but rather a metaphorical response to it, the origins of which lie in an urban environment that simultaneously overwhelms the senses and seemingly defies comprehension. In the face of a reified world that appears to lie beyond human understanding and control, spatial agency retreats to the fortification of domestic enclaves on the one hand, and the episodic pursuit of mystical rejuvenation through different forms of spectacular experience on the other.

"There will always be limits to our knowledge, and nature will always be, finally, impenetrable," writes Christopher Hitt (1999).

> An ecological sublime would remind us of this lesson by restoring the wonder, the inaccessibility of wild nature. In an age of exploitation, commodification and domination we need awe, envelopment, and transcendence. We need, at least occasionally, to be confronted with the wild otherness of nature and to be astonished, enchanted, humbled by it. Perhaps it is time—while there is still some wild nature left—that we discover an ecological sublime (620).

Recent writing on the sublime has similarly emphasized the emancipatory effects that can emerge from an encounter with phenomena that defy subsumption beneath dominant forms of reason, forcing us into a productive engagement with the limits of human understanding and installing a posture of openness and acceptance toward otherness of all kinds. [26] As praiseworthy as such sentiments clearly are, we must also recognize the ease with which the sublime, or, rather the images and spaces that both generate and express it, can serve as an aesthetic veneer for reified forms of experience in which our world—and the social, political and economic forces that govern it—are perceived and felt to exist beyond our control. As Manuell Castells observes, "flows of power generate the power of flows, whose material reality imposes itself as a natural phenomenon that cannot be controlled or predicted, only accepted and managed. This is the real significance of the global restructuring process" (Cited in Soja 2000, 214). Irrespective of whether such hyperbole is actually true, images of nature as sublime offer a compelling metaphor through which to recognize (and misrecognize) what it feels like to live within the petrified urban and suburban landscapes of postmodern capital. Yet the ideological significance of these images does not only lie in a literal naturalization of social space, but, more importantly, in how they invite us to actively embrace and even celebrate this fate. The real secret of fascism, Benjamin once argued, was the transformation of alienation into a cultural spectacle, an aesthetic pleasure of the first order. Nature in advertising, I would suggest, performs a nearly identical function

today. For if as one critic has argued "the sublime is about aestheticizing conditions of impossibility for discourse" (Stormer 2004, 213), then nature offers an ideal metaphor through which the 'impossibility' of understanding, mapping and controlling social space can become the grounds for spectacular forms of pleasure and agency.

Endnotes

1. This paper was originally prepared for delivery to Ecology, Imperialism and the Contradictions of Capitalism, a conference at York University commemorating the 25th anniversary of the journal Capitalism, Nature, Socialism. My thanks to the conference organizers and participants for a stimulating venue in which to discuss these ideas. I'd also like to acknowledge the support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council which helped fund this research.

2. My understanding of the relationship between affective and ideological processes has been shaped by Lawrence Grossberg's (1992) pathbreaking work in cultural studies. "Affect," he writes, "has a real power over difference, a power to invest difference and to make certain differences matter in different ways. If ideology and even pleasure constitute structures of difference, these structures are unrealized without their inflection through an affective economy" (105). I discuss the significance of this conceptualization at greater length in Gunster (2004a).

3. The ads that I analyzed for this project are drawn primarily from two samples. The first is a set of 1,800 original ads (i.e. no duplicates) extracted from a survey of 150 hours of United States and Canadian television in October and November 2004. The second is an additional sample of roughly 560 ads that were reviewed from a commercial database managed by Adforum, a company that provides information and creative services to the advertising industry, including a systematic collection of work from major global advertisers and agencies. Ads that I discuss from the first sample have, for the most part, been reproduced in this article under the Fair Use commentary and critique provisions of U.S. copyright law. Given that access to ads from the second example is strictly regulated—including the requirement that the ads not be duplicated in any form—I have been unable to provide access to them in this format.

4. UPS—squares, personal ad capture.

5. Analysis of ads for this project was conducted in two stages. First, I reviewed a random sub-sample of 800 ads from a set of 1,800 original commercials extracted from a survey of 150 hours of cable and broadcast television from October and November 2004. In particular, I investigated the presence of recurring spatial themes as well as to determine which product categories were more likely than others to draw upon images or stories that foregrounded representations of space. Based upon these results, I subsequently gathered an additional sample of ads from the Adforum archive. Specifically, I reviewed an additional 350 automotive ads, 150 ads for the banking and financial services sector, and 60 ads for business services. In total, then, a sample of 1,360 television commercials, or approximately 11 ½ hours of material were analyzed for this project. Although only a small fraction of this material is explicitly discussed below, the images and themes chosen for discussion are broadly reflective of dominant patterns found in the whole sample.

6. The 2005 Advertising Age survey of the leading 100 advertisers in North America reports that roughly $10.2 billion were spent on media buys in network and cable television by the automotive sector, compared to just over half that amount for the next leading sectors of retail and pharmaceutical. For a preliminary attempt to sketch out the significance of automobile advertising for popular conceptions of utopia, see Gunster (2007).

7. Nissan pathfinder—tell better stories, www.adfolio.com.

8. Mitsubishi—passing lanes, www.adfolio.com.

9. Jaguar—lust, personal ad capture.

10. The following section draws upon an analytic framework I first developed in Gunster (2004b) and also see my discussion of the concept of 'second nature' in critical theory in Gunster (2004a, 71-80).

11. Saab—sameness, www.adfolio.com.

12. Honda Pilot—nothing routine, www.adfolio.com.

13. Jeep—nowhere, personal ad capture; and Acura—wilderness, www.adfolio.com.

14. Nissan—x, www.adfolio.com.

15. Vwtouareg—camera, personal ad capture.

16. Jeep commander—sharks, personal ad capture.

17. Jeep Commander—view, personal ad capture.

18. See, for example, the strong collection of essays in Braun and Castree (1998).

19. Acura—angry forest, personal ad capture.

20. Lexus—wind god, www.adfolio.com.

21. Volvo—shark, personal ad capture.

22. Toyota—disaster, personal ad capture.

23. Toyota tacoma—meteor, www.adfolio.com.

23. Jeep—unexpected, www.adfolio.com.

24. See, for example, the discussion in Holmqvist and Pluciennik (2002).

25. For recent examples, see Stormer (2004) and Pence (2004).

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Landscapes of the Social Relations of Production in a Networked Society

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> Thus the social relations within which individuals produce, the social relations of production, change, are transformed, with the change and development of the material means of production, the productive forces. The relations of production in their totality constitute what are called the social relations, society, and specifically, a society at a definite stage of historical development, a society with a peculiar and distinctive character (Marx "Wage Labor and Capital" 1849: 207).

Each stage of capitalist society constitutes such a totality of relations, subject to a dialectic of historical change in which developments in the material means of production prompt transformations of social relations, and vice versa. These social relations of production "in their totality" include the work relations affected by division of labor, technology, and organizational technique. Such arrangements have historically been stratified by race, gender, age and ethnicity. Another fundamental dimension of capitalist society encompasses the structures imposed by market forces and commodity relations. The formal-legal relations of property ownership and contracts define rights of access to productive resources as well as defining how the surplus is appropriated and by whom. And, the wider relations of production encompass those who are not directly in the labor force - children, retirees, and those who help reproduce the conditions of everyday life (e.g., unpaid housework). People's social relationships and their ideas about themselves, about nature and the social world may be understood in relation to the ways productive and reproductive activity is organized.

The social relations of production in a capitalist society are complex, contradictory, conflictual and unequal. Property relations, work relations and market relations yield not just stratification patterns but the deeper patterns that govern appropriation of surplus and class relations. It might seem odd then to envision the social relations of production - the deep underlying structural forces - through the lens of advertising. After all, ads are all about superficiality. They celebrate the sponsoring corporation, place a halo around its representation, gloss social relations, and repress as much as possible what is negative, conflictual, complex or unequal about the corporate political economy. Advertising works as an extension of public relations discourse and thus situates the unfettered corporation as the prime movers of technological, economic, social and political progress.

Advertising might be superficial and intentionally one-sided, but it is not entirely stagnant. In order to connect with its potential audiences, ads also carry within their discursive frames hints of important transformations that may be taking place with the transition to global systems of production. Because Capital is not monolithic, but constituted by competing interests, agendas and discourses, advertising does not present a unitary vision of society. We would expect nothing less in a competitive capitalist system. Hence while advertisers might say nothing negative about their own brand that does not prevent them from denigrating competitors' services or products. To diminish the brand value of competitors, advertisers may address problematic aspects of the social relations of production by making jokes about them. We have written extensively of "sign wars" or "brand wars" wherein advertisers do battle with signs and symbols in search of brand dominance. Ironically, in this domain of sign competitions where initially it seemed as if all concern with how goods and services are actually produced, distributed and consumed had vanished, the ghostly spectre of the social relations of production reappears.

Ads compose stylized spatial landscapes of the relations of production, while sometimes sketching quick portraits of subject types who occupy these spaces. Thus some ads personify Capital in the idealized figures of a

highly mobile business elite, while others offer tightly condensed apocryphal stories of success and failure. No less than the landscapes they occupy, representations of a contemporary business and technology elite thus reflect certain characteristics associated with the new information economy: flexible accumulation, de-territorialization, space-time compression, electronic markets and incessant technical innovation.

Corporate ads thus celebrate the surface of global capitalism, but the landscapes and portraits they imagine often express social and cultural contradictions even as they seek to suppress growing disparities in wealth. This kind of advertising discursively legitimates neo-liberal market capitalism by leaving out the consequences of capitalist institutions on nonelites, especially those who own nothing and those who have no recourse but to overpopulated labor markets. But while political-economic inequalities rarely register in these ads, there is no corresponding repression of the cultural contradictions that Richard Sennett (1999) traces out in the Corrosion of Character. What happens, Sennett asks, when individuals actually internalize the requirements of flexibility, risk, and job and geographic mobility? For one thing the ideals of close familial relations between parents and children suffer. Hence we may see the celebration of flexibility and mobility in ads, while also encountering "landscapes of fear" and "abandonment" (Gold and Revill 2003; Salerno 2003). Advertising frequently pivots on fear by offering to resolve the fear of loss (in this case, separation from loved ones) with an appropriate commodity, service, or symbolic corporate father. A 1999 Allianz ad exemplified this with a symbolically condensed scenic drama that evoked the anxiety of parent-child separation and the loss of that love, but trumped that anxiety with "the promise," a reference to the sanctity of personal character made possible by an omnipresent and caring corporate infrastructure distributed throughout a necessarily fast paced, mobile world.

The imagined landscape of stratification that takes shape across the body of advertising is driven by the contradictory needs of corporate advertisers to position their commodity interests and their quest to preserve their public standing as legitimate institutions. Hence while ads endeavor to glorify the distinctions of status, honor and privilege that come from inequality, they also seek to repress and deny gross inequalities because they threaten the legitimacy of the system.

How does the "capitalist realism" of corporate ads portray the social relations of production circa the millennium? Is this "capitalist realism" or something closer to the postmodern simulacrum that Jean Baudrillard theorizes? It may be that elements of both are at work in the constitution of these representations. As we explore the following questions we want to keep an open mind about whether the representations derive from the referents or if the representations are the original - are we looking at a substitution of signs of the real for the real? With that in mind, what role do markets and commodities play in people's lives as represented on the small screen? What does the capitalist elite look like and how are they related to those who produce or those who are denied access to the social surplus? How does technology redefine the categories of producers in these representations? What groups rise in importance? Who disappears? Who are the managers of capital, the information workers, the entrepreneurs, the individual investors, the manual laborers, the farmers, the poor? How are their images gendered and racialized? What happens to the frames of social class? How are spatial representations of the relations of production linked to axes of control and agency?

Social Relations in a Universal Market

In a capitalist society the commodity relation becomes the standard form of relationship. Money may seem to be the driving force of capitalism, but its importance derives from the deeper workings of the capitalist system. Beneath the surface of the cash nexus lies the structuring logic of commodity relations. Karl Marx's analysis began with labor as a commodity (wage labor), in which the real laboring activity of individuals was transformed into abstract labor to make it possible to freely substitute one person's labor time for another's. Labor measured in standardized units could be compared across time and place, making possible a universal currency that could turn all non-equivalents into equivalencies.

Once this process of wage labor took control, the commodity relationship extended into consumption relations since one now had to purchase one's needs through the wage. Marx saw capitalist development pushing commodity relations into more and more areas of life. This historical process has taken nearly two centuries to play itself out until few relationships in our lives have not been transformed into commodities in the universal market.

Advertising stands in a necessarily ambivalent relationship to commodification. Advertising is fundamentally

involved in processes of universal commodification -- marketers and advertisers assist in extending the commodity relationship to ever more arenas of life. Yet, in order to secure viewers' interpretive cooperation, advertisers may also feel compelled to distance themselves from the results of commodification and their role in the relentless drive to incorporate all that is meaningful into the universal marketplace. Advertising blankets the cash nexus with narratives and signifiers that situate the meaning of commodities within noncommodified relations. Since commodity exchange is the presupposition of every ad, we do not need to be told that each product has a price - we simply understand that the good or service being promoted has a price to be paid for with money, or its functional substitute, the credit card.

While advertisers have an obvious self-interest in repressing the conflicts that surround class relations, they cannot ignore the cultural uneasiness prompted by the extension of the commodity form and "callous cash payment" into more and more areas of social life. Marx described the social and cultural consequences of turning everything into capitalist markets.

> "It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his "natural superiors," and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous 'cash payment.' It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value" (Marx and Engels 1848/1978:475).

Historically, the relentless extension of commodity relations has undermined traditional values, promoted extreme individuation, and reduced decision making to cold commodity calculation. When market forces dictate values, there tends to be less social stability as "all that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned…" For this reason, ads seek to arrest the process of change when it comes to the supposedly deep values held by Anglo-Americans regarding that which is "holy" - family and community. Though the combination of labor markets and universal consumption has "reduced the family relation to a mere money relation" advertisers seek to reassert the "sentimental veil." Ads ranging from McDonald's to MasterCard to AT&T to Arthur Andersen to Nortel swath the imagery of commodity consumption in emotionally meaningful scenes of parent-child bonding. Advertisers consistently seek to disguise the impersonality of market forces with a fabricated tapestry composed of signifiers of warmth, community, social comfort, and caring.

In corporate advertising the handshake is used to stand in for exchange relations. When a farmer greets a Dow representative with a handshake, perhaps he is thanking him for the chemicals that made possible the bountiful corn crop in the background. The handshake reaffirms the corporation's presence in the farmer's life. But where is the moment of exchange? This side of the exchange relationship is invisible. Though the consequences of using corporate commodities or services may be visible, the actual flow of commodities is less visible (though implied), and we do not see at all the flow of capital that returns nor do we see the labor that produces that capital. Even as capital reduces all commodities and relations to exchange value, the handshake symbolically reverses all this, transforming the formal contractual relationship back into the appearance of a personalized Gemeinschaft relationship. It adds a human touch to the cold hard logic of capital. It connotes neighborliness and friendship and brands the corporation with these meanings.The handshake offers a recognizable signifier of a mythical time when the forces of community and friendship shaped the character of men's dealings with one another. The handshake signifies a unification of the dual Myths of Patriarchal Individualism and Jeffersonian Gemeinschaft. Here the handshake imagery draws on hazy notions of a precapitalist space where a multiplicity of bonds determined the character of people's dealings with one another. Even though these corporate handshakes are abstracted gestures that occur in placeless spaces the handshake remains unshakably a marker of a just and fair exchange among equals. As a signifier it suggests consensus and an absence of coercion. Social relations appear guided by norms of mutuality rather than the calculus of contracts.

While advertising discourse spectacularizes the power of the commodity to enhance social relations, the real nitty-gritty of producing value is either omitted, abstracted, or aestheticized. Advertising spins a narrative web of commodity fetishism and technological fetishism. Viewers become so acclimated to seeing objects of value apparently materialize out of thin air, that they do not express alarm until their paychecks disappear. Neither does advertising dwell on the amount of labor necessary to acquire the cash equivalent to participate in the exchange. As advertising seeps into every nook and cranny of our social lives, it becomes increasingly difficult to take a critical position toward the process of commodification. While a critical assessment of commodification lies well beyond the discourse of advertising, advertising is curiously sensitive to popular criticism of 'over-commercialization' or 'crass commercialism.' Indeed, when relations are viewed as merely conduits to making money, then the words 'vulgar' and 'dirty' come to mind. Hence at the same time that ads seek to turn what is valuable to us into new sources

of commodity value, more than a few campaigns seek to distance themselves from that process by conjuring up a nostalgic desire for living in a non-commodified world.

Distancing a brand from the logic of fetishism may involve claims to authenticity based on the assumption that commodities have no soul, but rather masquerade as authentic in search of an easy buck. The semiotic divide between authenticity and the inauthentic is by now familiar (Goldman & Papson 1996). Another strategy exposes the metacommunication that underlies the advertising project itself to discredit competitors. Metacommunication is usually tacit, a set of assumptions that premise the manifest communication taking place; that is, the dimension of price does not need to be stated, it is understood. By leaving aside the matter of price, most ads sidestep the messy and conflicted terrain of privileging exchange value over use. Similarly, when consumer-goods ads routinely seek to invest desirable human traits in the products themselves, they do not normally draw attention to doing this in a self-conscious manner. But as audiences become more savvy about advertising gambits, some advertisers acknowledge the tacit assumptions in order to regain the trust of consumers and gain a competitive advantage through a differentiated brand position. Sprite's "Image is Nothing" campaign mocks the premise of commodity fetishism to distance its own brand image as beyond such infantile practices. By disclosing the logic of puffery Sprite lays claim to being a brand that sides with the consumer.

By contrast contemporary corporate advertising is less likely to engage in this kind of self-reflection because corporate ads more often promote the institutions that organize the exchange, circulation, distribution and production of the commodities themselves. In corporate advertising, the tone of voice is more sincere and less cynical about the commodification of place, sentiment, and social relations. Capital positions commodification as an inevitable process driven by technological advances, neatly reversing the relationship between commodification and technology. In corporate advertising, commodification coincides with an antiseptic, tidy, civil society where intelligent corporate stewardship of technology and capital turns alienation on its head - distilling out the cold, impersonal calculus of market logic. The process of globalization is contingent upon the free movement of capital and its products and services into all social relations in all cultural settings.

Three Cheers for the Warm Fuzzy Dollar

And yet, specifically amongst companies involved in the flow of money or its equivalents, there has emerged, circa the millennium, an inclination to soften their quest to turn the entire world into a stage for callous cash exchanges. Banks and credit card franchises feel compelled to remind viewers that though their business revolves around pushing the commodity framework everywhere (e.g., VISA) they remain committed to a moral hierarchy that recognizes our nearest and dearest relations can never be reduced to commodity form. Citibank ("Live Richly"), Chase ("The right relationship is everything.") and Bank of America, three of the largest banks in the western world, all stress the importance of that which cannot be commodified - love and caring amongst family members or the experience of true friendship. This has long been the strategy of MasterCard's campaign structured to call attention to the prices of commodities that we want and need for specific occasions, as a prelude to stressing that the relationships and experiences we most value are "priceless."

MasterCard's long-running "Some things money can't buy" campaign blends two themes: disposable income and quality time. Simply, if you have money you can provide for your family: insurance, medical care, a baseball game. Constructed out of warm fuzzy music and caring parental glances, ads in this genre exaggerate the moment of care while refusing to acknowledge the moment of exchange. MasterCard defined itself as an exception: its ads foreground the costs of things. MasterCard ads follow family members traveling the world sharing meaningful moments -- a couple celebrates their anniversary in India, another travels to China to see the Great Wall, a daughter takes her mother back to her home town in Ireland, best buddies fulfill a pledge to one another to attend a game in every major league baseball venue, and parents and children share quality time. In one ad, we even see the father hand over the gold MasterCard to pay for food and souvenirs at a baseball game. But here the ad's sleight of hand transforms the moment of exchange into a moment of care. The narration turns the moment of exchange into the necessary means of achieving the greater goal - the priceless as an end in itself.

> Two tickets: $28
> 2 hot dogs, 2 popcorns, and 2 sodas: $18
> one autographed baseball: $45
> Real conversation with 11 year old son: priceless.
> There are some things money can't buy.
> For everything else there's MasterCard.

Accepted all over -- even major league ball parks

The commodities, and the credit card that permits their universal acquisition, serve a higher purpose - achieving a meaningful bond between a father and son. "There are some things money can't buy." The experience of bonding with one's child could become commodified, but then it would be an alienated relationship. And yet all those purchases made to take the kid to a major league baseball game - those purchases that set up the conversation - aren't those sort of an attempt at buying your kid's love?

Campaigns like this naturalize the universality of commodity relations while reassuring that the market is not antagonistic to those affective personal relationships that ought never be reduced to a price. But such ads also divert attention from mechanisms of generating and allocating surplus. Never mind the 24% default interest rate if there is ever a glitch in repaying the debt on the balance sheet. Usurious interest payments on credit card debt or loans are vaporized amid the social bonding. Rhetorically, Bank of America ads pushed the envelope further, touting the nobility of altruistically contributing to the greater good rather than simply seeking the greatest self-interest, while also criticizing those who wear the blinders of the commodity form and thus lack vision: "People who know the price of everything [but] the value of nothing."

The Re-visioning of Class Formations

While considerable evidence points to a widening income gap and burgeoning disparities in the distribution of wealth spurred on by the globalized "free" market economy, television representations of inequality and difference are moving in the opposite direction. Social critics point to a new binary in which the concentration of wealth disproportionately ascends to the smallest fraction of the population. Films like The City of God provide a glimpse of the suffering and death associated with the poverty of Brazilian slums. World news can scarcely avoid occasional photographic reminders of the dire forms that extreme poverty takes -- Palestinian refugee camps, drought-stricken Ethiopia, victims of civil wars in the Sudan, the congested cities of South Asia.

Yet, even as divisions of inequality deepen across the global landscape, the concept of class -- much less, class conflict -- is scarcely visible in the world of ads. Over the last few decades, industrial labor and the production of goods have steadily disappeared from ads. Today material production has been reduced to fleeting signifiers of self-moving, apparently autonomous, technologies. Social class as a function of occupational location is occasionally reinvoked in ads, usually as a means of hailing potential consumers - the most obvious instance involves selling tough trucks to tough working class men. Glimpses of the working class are at best transitory in most corporate ads - a passing shot of a hardhat, or Chinese stevedores unloading a ship, or shots chosen to evoke the historical authenticity and durability (e.g., construction workers building the New York Life tower) of contemporary corporate entities.

When an occasional allusion to craftsmanship is made, the reference is to pre-industrial capital, or intriguingly, to post-industrial capital, where computer-driven machinery permits a smooth precision compatible with a craftsmen-like view of quality, sometimes without the presence of human beings being required at all. As with commodity advertising the site of material production is largely absent. When signifiers of production do appear, they take the form of high-speed automated robotics. When workers are present, they most likely gaze at control panels and other simulations of the act of production. If we see either factories or workshops, workers have been turned back into adjuncts to computer controlled tools - this is not the first time in the history of industrialization that workers have been depicted as machine tenders, but this time the role is glamourized by the presence of glinting, streamlined high tech tools -- or they have disappeared altogether. Though the work shown is probably still tediously repetitive manual labor, the references are so brief and the setting so glamourized, that the possibility of alienated activity seems remote. Value seems to be produced magically without labor.

A 2005 Bank of America commercial both references the new global proletariat while also burying their appearance beneath a discourse about perfecting customer service. The ad features an African-American corporate banker at Bank of America who is in charge of seeking perfection - zero tolerance for errors -- in check processing. As surprising as it might be to see an African American featured as a corporate banker, more surprising is a scene that lasts barely two seconds -- the scene that captures the new global working class, employed not as industrial workers but as check processors. Like their boss they are people of color, apparently Hispanic, Asian, and African. But there the similarity ends. We might guess that they are largely immigrants, and we can see they are female by a

two to one ratio. The remainder of the ad visually swamps this scene with one shot after another of the equipment and software through which the high speed processing of checks occurs. This ad permits us to disentangle a set of self-contradictory representations: first, it is unique, no other ads acknowledge this stratum of office workers in the 2065 ads we've examined; second, this ad contains a kernel of truth, this is how computer-age proletarian work has evolved, no longer on the industrial floor, but doing repetitive data entry and paper processing tasks - more often than not, these tasks are outsourced to the Caribbean; and third, the disposability of these workers can be calculated in relation to the visual centrality and importance of automated machinery that now drives the circulation of money.

Class does not entirely disappear, but it ceases to exist as a function of production. Instead, class continues to be meaningful in the sphere of consumption and aesthetics. Ads for upscale hotels like Doubltree, Westin and Starwood aimed at business elites reaffirm Pierre Bourdieu's discussion of social class signified by an aesthetic disposition expressed through the pure gaze, which "implies a break with the ordinary attitude towards the world which, as such, is a social break" (1984:31). Elite status turns into a series of consumptive choices made by people who possess a self-reflexive appreciation of refined sensibilities.

Questions of class position are not transposed to the sphere of consumption alone, but also to the sphere of investment. This in itself is unsurprising. What is surprising is the new relationship between investing and social class as defined by ads. The ads redefine investing not as an elite domain but as a sphere accessible and available to everyone regardless of race, gender, creed, and even class. As implausible as it may seem, ads redefine investing as beyond class, as part of a post-class social landscape.

In the new capitalism, everyone is pictured as having access to the means of acquiring wealth via their investments. This is taken to its jovial limits in an Ameritrade ad set in an English language class for immigrants. This melting pot of persons from Africa, South Asia, Philippines, Eastern Europe and Latin America may not understand much English, but they quickly assimilate the economic culture as they show their teacher the joys of Ameritrade and the ability to trade stocks on your computer. This tribute to the proprietary excellence of Ameritrade is quickly expanded by ad's end when a Russian émigré exclaims, "And they said capitalism would never work" while the word "believe" settles across the screen. The stock market boom set in motion a frenzied competition to reach the great unwashed (as far as stock trading went) and reduced sales commissions quickly attracted many who had never traded stocks before and were eager to get rich quick along with everyone else. This vision of trading stocks abolishes all hard and fast stratification boundaries - here is the long-awaited utopian capitalism where the possibilities of achieving prosperity are available to all, where there appear to be no structural losers.

Of course, such a conception requires that we push aside questions about where profits come from. This view of a universal stock market requires either the open admission that some other group is getting the shaft elsewhere, or the pretense that investment only produces win-win situations. No one will acknowledge the former as a possibility, but the latter kind of rationale is advanced by Travelers in a series of 1998 ads that give voice to the narrative rationalizations of middle class investors about how their investments will benefit themselves along with distant others in the developing world.

One ad pictures a youngish woman seated amid her sedate middle class furnishings, musing to herself about how that dollar she invested will go to "South America to build a gas pipeline over the mountains, so people in Chile can have clean air and hot showers. And the pipeline is gonna help the economy, and that's gonna help my dollar so when it finally comes back to me it might be more like $4. And I might be more like looking at the real estate section." The investment process seems tranquil and serene, almost dreamlike in the way the scenes are edited, without a hint of coercion or unequal exchange. In fact, visually the process takes place without any exchanges whatsoever, although as her discussion moves to the economy and her return on investment, the landscape of Chile turns into an aesthetically pleasing, abstract waveform pattern. This sine form pattern with its imagery of recurring flows suggests a metaphor for consensual intercourse in the marketplace.

A recurring social type in the investing landscape is depicted as a fresh kind of savvy and independent investor with entrepreneurial spirit. Suretrade ads featured self-identified "mavericks" and "pioneers," a new breed defined by a shift in attitudes and paradigms - they are not looking to government to solve their problems nor to large corporations. They are confident that new computer technologies applied to trading stocks will create a democratized playing field that puts them in the driver's seat. Structured as a montage of soundbites arranged to form a serial soliloquy, three Suretrade ads construct the following ideological self-portraits.

1st young woman: "We're not relying on the government."
Young man: "We're not relying on the company."

2nd man: "We're not relying on a big, fat inheritance."
3rd man: "We trade on-line."
2nd woman: "We're betting on ourselves."

Young woman with a laptop on the couch: "We don't need a financial babysitter."
Young man: "We're declaring our independence."
2nd young male: "We're realistic, but hopeful."
3rd male: "We'll find our own way."
2nd woman: "We work harder for ourselves than anyone else will. We're pioneers."
Young man at his keyboard: "We're not caught up in the hype of technology, we're just using it."

Young woman: "Corporations are slower than we are."
2nd man: "We are a million individuals.
Woman with daughter and pet rabbit: "We're modern capitalist mavericks."
3rd man: "We're shattering the old broker universe."

These portraits resemble those of the skilled information workers to whom we will shortly turn. They tend to be young, confident, self-contained, and unconstrained. Their apparent social and economic well-being represents a function of their own choices, not the gifts of inheritance nor of entitlement. These portraits are all set in the individual's homes, spaces they apparently control, where they smugly declare themselves capable of self-motivation without the whip of authority to spur them on. They are not simply individuals; they represent a new social class of "maverick capitalists" who refuse to bow to convention or to the hierarchical system of doing things set in place by a Brahmin broker elite. As do-it-yourselfers they play out a populist imaginary for an era of networked technology, where those who make themselves savvy in the use of new technology lay claim to being more agile and swift than the behemoth corporations.

Related to the Suretrade representations, and mirroring what Richard Florida (2002) has called The Rise of the Creative Class, is an emergent form of "alreadyness" in ads for financial devices, investing, software, computers and telecommunications that hails the "creative" subject. This expressive subject feels restricted and unfree within the confines of bureaucratic organizations, aspires to own his or her own business, or to work from home, or seeks to invest with sufficient success that she can pursue her goals independent of the marketplace if necessary. American Express ads feature subjects who possess "vivid imaginations" in its campaign for the small business card - they are restaurateurs, chocolatiers, landscape designers, dress designers, veterinarians, architects, wine merchants, bakers, and sculptors. Microsoft's ads often seek to position its name as synonymous with a new stage of human development that aims at customizable freedom - no dream is impossible and no person or place is insignificant. The new Capital (e.g., Microsoft) exists to serve the self-expression of the sacrosanct free-standing human subject: "At Microsoft we stand in awe of you and your potential. It's what inspires us to create software that helps you reach it." Moreover, like American Express, Microsoft ads promise that their tools and instruments transform creativity into economically lucrative ways of life.

Microsoft's 1999 "Breadman" ad illustrates the new entrepreneurial imaginary situated in the landscapes of small town community. A traditionally working class position is thus transformed into an icon for the nouveau middle class creative who is simultaneously the anchor of a small town Gemeinschaft network. Microsoft's "Breadman" imagines himself as thus independent - a franchisee, networked with other franchisees -- able to pursue his own dreams, and much beloved by his fellow townspeople. "Who wouldn't want to be the bread man? Wouldn't you want to walk around and be the bread man? Everyone walks around and says 'hey, that's the bread man.'"

The Empty Binary of Class Relations

As a corollary to re-visioning class formations, the over 2,065 TV ads we've studied rarely represent any relationship between classes or class actors. Fragmented glimpses of figures who are marked as possessing a class position are either narrated without the frame of class as a category, or keep such figures isolated. And as Hegel long ago reminded us, a master is not a master without a slave to recognize him as such. It is not surprising that images of the world poor are mostly absent from the landscapes of corporate advertising. When the poor do appear, it is to demonstrate that human dignity has not been forgotten and that corporations like Philip Morris, American Express or Occidental Petroleum care about people and empathize with profound human suffering. The poor, as we shall see,

retain this semiotic functionality in how capitalism is represented in its own media.

While the poor are rarely depicted in television advertising, capitalist elites are not quite named as such either. This does not mean that corporate executives are invisible, but that questions regarding their social and economic rank and clout are kept blurry. It is frequently difficult to tell if a corporate executive is supposed to be a CEO, a vice president, or a manager. Few campaigns specify or differentiate functional responsibilities within the corporate hierarchy.[1] When real CEO's appear, as in NASDAQ ads, they are positioned as dynamic dreamers who recount with excitement, passion, and authority their pioneering places at the center of the new capitalist universe for the 21st century. Along with professing infinite faith in the entrepreneurial path that has enabled them to gain wealth and success, translating visions into reality, they reiterate a litany of motivational maxims (e.g., "Success is not an entitlement, it has to be earned") that are intended to articulate a future of global capitalism composed by companies that have just "scratched the surface of what's really possible."

The NASDAQ ads reveal more, however, than intended. Establishing the visionary character of corporate leaders who possess a "passion" for realizing their visions, the ads play to a mythology of the new economy -- successful companies depend on leaders who are innovative, inspirational, and have a courageous "entrepreneurial spirit." In these representations, the CEO's are the companies; they have engineered productive facilities that are devoid of workers. The leading edge of contemporary capitalism seems to be constituted by companies defined by passionately engaged, forward-thinking leaders, automated technologies, and products. This campaign hails the champions of the new economy, where the lion's share of rewards go to celebrity players, the "visionaries," while everyone else gets downsized, and once out of sight are also out of mind.

The NASDAQ ads are particularly instructive in narrating the linkage between philosophy of corporate organization and motivation that drives the leaders of Dell, Starbucks, Microsoft, Cisco, Staples and Intel. Similarly, Carly Fiorini, the first female CEO of a Fortune 100 company, took the stage in HP ads to narrate the philosophy of a firm rededicating itself to its roots in the "radical simplicity" of entrepreneurial invention and innovation. When Michael Dell, founder and CEO of Dell Computer, appeared in behalf of his company, the only allusion to his power was signified by the way he surveys the world through the window atop his company's grand architectural monument. In no instance, do these powerful corporate leaders speak of gaining wealth or fame or power, but rather of contributing to a "greater good."

> **"I like to think of myself as an Innovator who started a company - Dell Computer - around an idea that everybody should be doing business directly with one another. One to one - with no barriers. To me that's the power of the Internet. We'd like to show you how to empower your business in ways you'd never imagine. I'm Michael Dell and it's our reason for being."**

His self-presentation as an innovator seeking to harness the power of an idea that serves to empower others rather than enriching himself suggests a new kind of world-historical elite that seeks not to preserve its own power but revolutionize the social relations of production to make everyone an owner and everyone a winner.

Fictional CEO's sometimes appear in "sign war" ads shaped by a humorous tone. Such ads seek to devalue the credibility of competitors. Here, fictional CEO's tend to be the other company's CEO's - they may be pompous windbags (e.g., XO), ball-busting tyrants (UPS), or ignorant and incompetent executives (EDS). Though such representations are usually facetious in tone, they nonetheless present the other side of the capitalist corporation -- mistrust, abuse of power, incompetence, poor leadership, greed, insincerity, and a lack of innovation.

Television images of corporate executives also include glancing shots of them directing fiefdoms, issuing directives, demonstrating resolve, applying new technologies, jetting around the world, and reaping luxurious rewards. But by ghettoizing the "functionaries of capital" to a world of corporate towers, jet planes, haute architecture, and exotic resort hotel settings, these television images reveal no sense that a global underclass might be expanding or that the middle class might be eroding as a result of how Capital is expanding.

Michael Dell's pose as he surveys the world from the oversized window of his executive suite reminds us of Roland Marchand's observation that from the 1920s through the 1950s a recurring visual trope in ads was the executive gaze from atop a corporate tower. While such surveying gazes remain a signifier of commanding presence, today we are also apt to see corporate executives on the move. Through streets lined with corporate towers, through buildings, up stairs, escalators and elevators, through airports, in jets and on helicopters, executives symbolize dynamic capital, purposively and peripatetically in pursuit of the highest returns on investment.

A customary signifier of dynamic capital is suggested by tightly edited scenes of feet moving across floors, up stairs, through corridors, and sometimes even around the globe. Intercut into financial narratives, these signifiers of

dynamic movement combine with the conventions of photography to connote power, purpose, determination and direction. Executives are often shot from low angle, a cinematic device that gives the figure a dominating presence in the frame. At other times executives are placed on high, suggesting superiority, vision, knowledge, and success. Scenes of executives striding in formation, flanked by aides and subordinates connote a sense of decisiveness and determination on missions that abstractly move toward achieving goals like mergers, takeovers, and lucrative contracts. The wingtip shoe is so clearly marked as a signifier of power that a Morgan Stanley Dean Witter ad uses the device of the shoeshine stand to play up the idea that Capital no longer discriminates against women as it includes a woman's high heel in the "new old boy's club." [2]

The formula for success is knowledge, power, mobility, and determination. Situated in positions of power, the corporate elite imagistically embody these attributes -- they are active, informed, determined, focused, surrounded by technology. Even when the body is not moving, information continues to flow via cell phones and electronic information tools integrated into the scenes. Embodied in pinstripes, wingtips, and the other accoutrements of power, these scenes suggest that markets may be volatile but capital is composed and disciplined in its pursuit of opportunities. Nowhere is this scenario more graphically played out than in the 1999 ad campaign for Salomon Smith Barney that reveals a world moving at warp speed while the elite investment bankers calmly survey it as they spot the "opportunities" that will pay off.

These representations resemble what Thomas Friedman (1999) dubs the "Electronic Herd" in The Lexus and the Olive Tree. His metaphor embraces the volatility of markets in conjunction with the diffusion of capital across the electronic circuits of finance. According to Friedman, no corporation or nation-state can risk losing the favor of the Herd. In the global economy this can be catastrophic to market values. Those who comprise the Herd compete to maximize the rate of return on investments, which translates into manically scouring the planet for opportunities or cutting losses as quickly as possible when it is time to sell. The manic need to invest is matched by panic selling. Combined with the ability to transfer funds and monies electronically, a stock can be cut in half in hours, or a country's currency thrown into crisis with a rapidity hitherto unknown.

Friedman's metaphor of the electronic herd pictures an economic elite dashing about in a global free market economy fueled by technological innovation and the liquidity of capital forms (currency, stocks, commodities). The figures who compose this grouping are constructed as dynamic, mobile, and technologically sophisticated. They fluidly traverse the world of nonplaces and occupy office suites in corporate towers surrounded by personal communication technologies. And yet, even in these idealized abstractions, uncertainties and anxieties seep through. Narratives of success are sprinkled with hints of impending crisis, or stories of those who made the wrong choices - the wrong office equipment, the wrong software, the wrong package delivery service. The exhilaration associated with accelerated social, economic, and technological change mixes with an undercurrent of apprehension. Speed may mean winning, but it can also lead to crashing. There are more losers than winners in casino capitalism. The landscape of risk is omnipresent.

True Grit - The Persistence of Bourgeois Maxims in the Age of Globalization

In spite of dramatic changes evident with the transition to global capitalism - internet networks, the stress on speed, the demise of place in favor of the flow of spaces, the decline of old fashioned virtues such as aversion to debt in favor of the stress on the necessity of consumerism - the rhetoric of motivation remains unchanged. Corporate ads still sound like the fictional success stories so popular in the late nineteenth century - like the Horatio Alger stories with their emphasis on individual pluck and determination. The further corporations drift toward concentration and consolidation, the more they seem to fall back on the work ethic and its associated ideological maneuvers.

We have seen that new rules, new tools and new relationships mark off the depiction of a new business paradigm in corporate advertising. And yet, no matter what else changes in the landscapes of capital, the ideology of motivation and success continues to rely on the moral maxims of the work ethic. A 2004 Smith Barney campaign hails the work ethic as the basis of business success. Employing the serial monologue, multiple executives delineate the key terms of their work ethic, as if they speak in a unified discourse. A key difference between this enunciation and that performed by their bourgeois precursors is that it's no longer the sole domain of Anglo males - the old fashioned work ethic is now an equal opportunity ethic that draws race, gender and ethnicity under the same umbrella. The Smith Barney ad opens by superimposing a white male over the financial landscape to suggest power, knowledge and determination. This is followed by quick cutting close-ups of Smith-Barney people on the move, each of whom address directly with

confidence and conviction about what is required for success - theirs is the language of motivational clichés. There are no slackers here. They have been weaned out. Neither is there any secret of success, but rather a series of old-school motivational homilies about the values and practices of preparation, elbow grease, stubborn determination, will, dedication.

> What's the secret of success?
> You start with an insight. A vision.
> An indicator.
> There is no secret. No secret.
> It's 1% inspiration
> Followed by midnight oil
> Lots of elbow grease
> Determination
> Sheer stubbornness
> Relentlessness
> Determination
> Where there's a will
> There's always a way
> Provided, of course, you know what you're doing
> I don't know anyone
> Who's better trained than we are
> You want results?
> Come prepared. Stay late.
> Smith Barney
> This is who we are
> This is how we earn it

Charles Siebel "makes application software that let's you give your customers personalized service." However the imagery it invokes is not of the modern computer landscape, but of a solitary cowboy mending fences on the snowy high plains. "Once when you took on a job you did the job start to finish." In an age of high tech software applications and e-business tools, Charles Siebel positions itself as dedicated to doing the job right. Just like the ruggedly stalwart, inner-directed cowboy who takes pride in a job well done without someone monitoring him because he feels a deeply ingrained moral obligation to do so, so too this corporation maintains the highest moral standards vis-à-vis their customers not because someone is mandating it, "No one had to. It's our job."

Zygmunt Bauman (1999) draws our attention to the contrasts between the historical stages of heavy and liquid capitalism. Heavy capitalism designates that stage of industrialization in which capital depended on a massive, fixed infrastructure with industries like iron and steel in the lead. Material solidity was the hallmark of this era and its values seemed correspondingly stable, chained in time and place. The movement toward liquid modernity is characterized by a shift to electronic flows of information and a movement toward fluidity. Contemporary corporate ideologues praise all that is mobile, flexible, and agile, yet these very attributes of light capitalism and liquid modernity yield cultural values of inconstancy and weightlessness.

In ads like this for New York Life the solution is to reclaim the heavy metaphors of the past to describe the contemporary corporation. This notion that corporations need to define themselves by sincere pledges of allegiance to enduring values permeates the advertising of New York Life. Aware that the fixation on celebrity and the cult of personality yields ephemerality and a loss of depth, New York Life stresses their corporate fidelity to the abiding values of integrity and humanity. "What stands the test of time?" asks their narrator. The answer lies in values that insure security in a rapidly changing world. "Integrity is our foundation," declares another ad that anchors the firm in history-mediated imagery of muscular labor constructing monumental buildings of stone and steel.

When the headlines are about corporate fraud, accounting irregularities, embezzlement, price fixing, cost-cutting at the expense of quality, and warranties that are nothing but fine print, it is to be expected that a nostalgic mythos of a shimmering past will be invoked to shore up a value system driven by the necessities of an incessantly shifting marketplace. But this true grit floats like a signifier, summoned from an image bank of our past and fashioned into a pastiche that calls itself by the names of past virtues (hard work, integrity, pride of work and of one's word), as if conjuring up their images will insulate us from a fickle culture of images.

The Modern Nomad - Seeking Equanimity in a World of Non-Places

Zygmunt Bauman conceptualizes contemporary elites and nonelites by their relationships to space and time,

with mobility as the primary indicator of class.

> Tourists move because they find the world within their (global) reach irresistibly attractive - the vagabonds move because they find the world within their (local) reach unbearably inhospitable. The tourists travel because they want to; the vagabonds because they have no other bearable choice. The vagabonds are, one may say, involuntary tourists; but the notion of 'involuntary tourist' is a contradiction in terms (1998: 92-3).

An estimated 25 million persons work in foreign countries for global corporations. Trade agreements such as NAFTA have eased restrictions on corporate and business executives, professionals, and highly skilled workers as they move from one country to another (Anderson and Cavanagh, 2000: 25). Capital's privileged classes tend to be globally mobile, unbound to place; they match the fluidity and liquidity of Capital and traverse national borders with ease. Equipped with the technologies of mobility -- laptops, cell phones, platinum credit cards, and wireless connections to the global information system -- the globe-spanning nomadic elite inhabit what Marc Augé describes as the 'non-places' of supermodernity, a nomadic institutional structure designed to facilitate their cosmopolitan wanderings - (e.g., elite hotel chains and VIP lounges).

> Clearly the word 'non-place' designates two complementary but distinct realities: spaces formed in relation to certain ends (transport, transit, commerce, leisure), and the relations that individuals have with these spaces... For non-places mediate a whole mass of relations, with the self and with others, which are only indirectly connected with their purposes. As anthropological places create the organically social, so non-places create solitary contractuality (1992:94)

In a 1999 Allianz ad entitled "The Promise," as a father prepares to leave for a business trip, his daughter poignantly asks "promise to call me?" His odyssey takes him through contractual spaces: airport, hotel, rental car, and electronic communication circuits. He is a global actor, assured and confident as he travels through spaces drained of time and place. The son of capital, he is likewise liquid and flows across the landscape. Allianz insurance underwrites the circuits of capital connected by these non-places, the insurance to cover the uncertainties in the ungrounded spaces of supermodernity.

> Mobility. Covered by Allianz.
> Risk. Covered by Allianz.
> Performance. Covered by Allianz.
> Technology. Covered by Allianz.
> Life. Covered by Allianz.

The Allianz ad fuses liquid global capital with concern and dependability, muting the logic of capital through a familial analogy. Father to daughter is equivalent to Allianz and it clients. Like a father who thinks about his daughter during his travels, Allianz is always thinking about its insurees, "a promise is a promise. Wherever you are and whatever you do, Allianz with its global partners is the power beside you." And just as a father fulfills his promise to his daughter, Allianz will fulfill its promise.

Separately father and daughter gaze upward in their solitude, holding one another in their memories. It's an empty existence without the other. Using slow motion, superimpositions, dissolves, soft focus, pastels, in combination with the reassuring lyric, "no matter where you go I will be with you," the ad purports to keep alive the organic relationship in a world of supermodernity that has been stripped of any mothering female presence save token signifiers of a hired female caretaker's hands. A recurring social tableaux depicts absence from family members and the psychological response of longing. The moment of identity is the father/daughter relation; their pleasure and affect are connected to each other's voice. Satisfying as this paleosymbolic drama might be, the prospect of singular identity is unlikely found in the emptiness of non-places.

> What he is confronted with, finally, is an image of himself, but in truth it is a pretty strange image. The only face to be seen, the only voice to be heard, in the silent dialogue he holds with the landscape-text addressed to him along with others, are his own: the face and voice of a solitude made all the more baffling by the fact that it echoes millions of others. The passenger through non-places retrieves his identity only at customs, at the tollbooth, at the checkout counter. Meanwhile, he obeys the same code as others, receives the same messages, responds to the same entreaties. The space of non-place creates neither singular identity nor relations, only solitude, and similitude (Augé 1992:103).

While Allianz fashions an emptiness of home to match the emptiness of spaces passed through, AT&T affectively matches the solitude of non-places to the warmth of place. Elton John's "Rocket man" provides the

emotional musical background to express the loss of closeness for the modern nomad. He pines for his home, his wife, his child, the Earth, solid ground. His is the lonely disconnectedness and endless travel of supermodernity. Against the solitude expressed in the lyrics and images of air travel AT&T edits together a tapestry of images expressing warmth: the wife sleeping in a mahogany bed next to a bouquet of flowers, the daughter leaving for school, the wife in the kitchen preparing food, the child's purple violet broach that the wife slips into his briefcase. These are given narrative direction by the sequencing of his and her longing gazes. Longing is transformed into communication, a commodity exchange. He sends her a fax that reads "Meet me on the porch 9:00." The porch romanticizes the relationship. Shot in soft focus, it represents a haven from a heartless world. The demands of work and the nomadic existence experienced by executives are counteracted by tender memories of family life. Again, signifiers of a daughter are turned nostalgic. The Allianz and AT&T ads speak to the social separation implicit in doing business in the high tech world of global capital, while at the same time reinstating emotional contact through the telecommunications circuits of high tech capital.

Even the winners are made to confront the fragility of a world where the social is falling apart. The modern nomads who circumnavigate the globe to do business may long for the warmth of place, but we find them instead in places of warmth. They must make do with a signifier of affection: a photograph, a hair broach, a faxed note, a memento. Although power and mobility are celebrated, the social tableaux of adverts suggest that Capital creates a less than perfect world even for its winners. These representations also capture the social and psychological contradictions of a fast-paced economy: exhilaration and worry, change and uncertainty, possibility and risk, mobility and longing. The volatility and instability of a fluctuating market economy produce anxiety, and like commodity advertising anxiety can be a powerful psychological force linking corporate brands to anxiety-alleviating strategies -- investment for the future, protection of one's family, successfully competing against invisible enemies.

Infrastructures of Anxiety

Today's elite as portrayed on TV is defined by its relationship to financial capital, technology, and information. Advertising heralds the prevailing business-channel wisdom that technological innovation, when appropriately applied, provides a productivity advantage. But the ads also preach consternation that technological change will result in precipitate obsolescence, or that inappropriate technological choices can competitively doom a company. The logic of Capital has long necessitated creative destruction, but the process has accelerated. David Harvey's (1989) focus on time/space compression must be fused with technological innovation and market reaction. While corporate ads paint images of triumph and accomplishment, there are anxious undercurrents of uncertainty associated with the rapid turnover and instability of corporate structures, unending competitive pressures, market volatility, the difficulty of governing new technologies, as well as the unforeseen consequences of corporate decision-making. Nervous apprehension hangs in the air even for the most successful. As Hobbes noted long ago, the marketplace that is a "war of all against all" induces perpetual fear as well as perpetual motion. While corporate ads celebrate the exhilarating force of capital, a portion of advertising seizes on the undercurrents of nervous agitation amongst fearful executives who can never have enough information to make the right decisions. In this sense, firms like IBM, Microsoft and Oracle market their services in a therapeutic voice - offering cool confident consultants (technological, organizational, investment, marketing) or software that never gets rattled to restore a sense of serenity. In a business world that demands an incessant capacity for flexibility and adjustment, Microsoft Enterprise software makes the perfect employee because it does not have those pesky human emotions that make it vulnerable -- "the software is not flustered by this sudden turn of events, because the software does not fear change."

In a business world being overhauled by information technology, choosing the right technology solution is cast as a primary factor standing between success and failure. "Whether it's hardware, software, or service, it's your worst nightmare: Buying technology from a company that goes 'poof.'" Not surprisingly, one type of anxiety and 'failure' ad highlights executives who chose the wrong brand of technology.

In a 1998 Oracle ad, an executive sits alone at a bar, mulling over the fate of his company and his career. While the depressed exec slumps over the bar eating nuts, the bartender refills his drink. No more mountains to climb for this guy, just lonely alcoholism as he ponders what might have been. His stature diminished, the only other person present, a woman in a red dress at the bar ignores him as she does some paperwork. He placed his bet on "just-in-time" software when he should have gone with "integrated flow manufacturing."

Executive: Three years and a $100 million dollars putting in software for just-in-time manufacturing
Bartender: Yeah, so?
Executive: The world's biggest most profitable manufacturer just moved to something called flow manufacturing.
Bartender: Switch to flow.
Executive: I can't. $100 million and my software doesn't support it.
Bartender: So, uhhh, what software do the big guys use?
Narrator: Oracle. The world's second largest software company is the first with integrated flow manufacturing applications.
Executive: Big guys. I used to be a big guy.

Advertising associates technology with corporate brands - this simplifies the selection process. But of course, there is significant risk in committing oneself to a proprietary technology covered by a brand name. Hence, Oracle ultimately sells itself as the second-largest software company as if that fact alone will insulate end users from making a decision that isolates them like the executive at the bar. Of course, the ad conceals the flip side of this anxiety coefficient, that no competitive advantage can be gained if you use the same tool that everyone else is using.

Complicated technological products are not easily translated into thirty-second narratives. Instead jargon catch-phrases, such as bandwidth, networking, B to B, and flow manufacturing provide an abstracted shorthand that camouflages lack of knowledge and allays some of the trepidation associated with incomplete comprehension. Some firms now recognize how alienating high-tech jargon can be, and produce ads that joke about jargon and the anxiety it can induce.

Ads aimed at corporate decision-makers often focus on technological and organizational decisions. Either the technology seamlessly integrates into an organizational structure or it transforms the organizational structure so it can adapt to a techno-economic environment. As a genre these ads cultivate an atmosphere of anxiety associated with accelerating technological change. Organizational flexibility is celebrated as necessary to survival in a market economy that rewards speculative success. Nothing is static: the organization, the economic environment, nor the career trajectories of the players.

IBM's advertising leverages technological uncertainty to promote their products and services. Their ads join humor with anxiety to signify that in an era of rapid technological change, survival and growth are contingent on having an integrated technological infrastructure. Given the hypervelocity at which software and infrastructure change make a 'knowledge generation' obsolete every few years, in the informational economy technological expertise is often located at lower levels of the corporate hierarchy. Just as the middle class is at the mercy of plumbers, mechanics, and other tradesmen, executives strain to make decisions about technologies they don't quite understand. IBM ads often play on insecurities about insufficient technological expertise located at top levels of management. Their ads reveal executive company leaders pressured to promise too much growth too quickly until their organization starts to snap. In each ad this is followed by the tagline: "And that's when it hits you. You are so ready for IBM." IBM's 2001 campaign consisted of vignettes highlighting lurking techno-anxieties that haunt corporate leaders as they grow to their level of incompetence.

Lurking at the edges of other ads is an ominous corporate authority. Making the wrong decision unleashes his/its wrath (feared absent authority is not given female representation). Even when the authority is unseen, it is experienced as male. Films like Office Space, Fight Club and American Beauty capture the relationship between hierarchy, the absence of autonomy, and fantasies of transcendence often expressed as revenge. This is vividly brought to life in a humorous ISS ad for internet security systems that visits an executive who has been "let go." As he shaves, he engages in an imaginary conversation with his ex-firm, and he enacts his revenge - "now let's go of some things of yours." Since he retains his password information he begins to delete things like "accounts receivable for the last two years! Payroll, let go!" All very therapeutic for him as he continues to rage about how he has been ajudged as possessing a "below average employment history" (a reference to General Electric's system of evaluating personnel). Terminated!

IBM ads frequently address in joke form the trepidations, apprehension and fears middle management professionals live with in constantly being pressed to meet unreasonable deadlines and expectations. Another 2001 IBM ad plays on fears of downsizing following mergers and acquisitions and offers its own technology as the solution. Entitled "The Axe," this ads takes place in a darkened office. Silhouetted against a view of other corporate towers, in a darkened corner office, a corporate senior executive and a technical operations executive converse. The title, tone, and dialogue suggest that the CEO is about to fire his chief information officer, who expects it and has already meekly accepted his fate. This anticipation reflects the volatile instability of the economy and the corporate labor market. However, his real anxiety begins when he gets the news that he is not fired but instead has

been assigned the merged job, and with it a task that goes beyond his technical abilities or experience - "the hairiest integration project ever. With servers, storage, databases, it needs the right guy." All is not lost however, since with IBM one can outsource the expertise and the solutions in the form of "business infrastructure" services.

A 2003 IBM ad presents a young woman executive restlessly pacing in a psychiatrist's office as she recounts her dream. "I'm floating in water." In a scene that is supposed to represent her dream, she is seated along with a small group of executives at a conference table that is at sea. Her voicing rising in alarm, "Can't you see we're adrift, we're lost," she tries without success to turn their attention to their predicament. The psychiatrist replies, "Ahhh, liquidity issues," to which she vehemently reacts, "No, water, we're at sea! We're rudderless, we need help." Characteristic of IBM ads, the response in her dream by her fellow employees to her distressed warnings is that "this is Bob's meeting, Beth." This small aside permits IBM to more effectively hail their audience of businesspeople who are likely to smile at this nod to the petty status games that often displace the real work that needs to be done. What does her dream mean? Her psychiatrist reiterates the obvious, "That you're lost, adrift and need help...Call IBM Business Consulting."

A 2004 Siebel ad fashions a slightly different tableau of managerial fear as a boss interrogates his sales staff about lead conversions rates. As each employee is called upon in turn, they already know they have underperformed and so hesitate with their answers while imagining their worst punishment fears. Jim imagines being lowered into a pot of molten metal. Nancy and Steve picture themselves drowning without a life raft in the open ocean. Another executive grimaces, visualizing himself about to be drawn and quartered by horses galloping in opposite directions. The screen turns to blue with "Say goodbye to that awkward, uninformed feeling" printed across it. Suddenly, the mood changes and each salesperson answers again, knowledgeable and confident about new sales leads and increased conversion rates.

As expectations concerning growth and productivity rise, so do the anxiety levels associated with meeting those expectations. Post-Fordist economic formations not only generate postmodern cultural formations but also socio-psychological tendencies contingent upon ones position in the economy. The Seibel and IBM ads seize on graphic visual metaphors, such as being adrift at sea, to capture worries associated with the uncertainty of performing in the informational economy where change is so pervasive that virtues of personal flexibility are simultaneously exercises in disorientation. These ads situate anxiety in terms of loss of control - the loss of faith in one's ability to stay current. Where mergers, corporate downsizing and re-engineering are the coin of the day, and where career paths erode and destabilize, there is an ever-present sense of vulnerability. Despite the therapeutic image of the psychiatric couch, the IBM suggests that the only therapeutic fix is a short-term commodity fix, and strangely, given a therapeutic culture that counsels fixing the self from within, the only way to solve the problems presented here comes with pleasing an external authority whose standards may or may not be legible (Sennett 1998).

Information Technology Workers

Rooted in the microchip, computer software, and telecommunications industries, the information technology revolution has spidered out into enterprises across the economic landscape. Information networks and information flows have grown exponentially over the last two decades as more and more corporate institutions have adopted electronic networks. Adoption of electronic networks began with financial institutions and by 1990 "network applications occasioned a spectacular increase in capital expenditures that showed no signs of letting up."[3] Information technology workers are defined by the Information Technology Association of America as skilled workers who perform any function related to information technology, defined as the "study, design, development, implementation, support or management of computer-based information systems, particularly software applications and computer hardware."[4]

The telecommunications sector became a key driver of Internet expansion beginning in the early 1990s. Telecoms invested heavily in the installation of routers and switches with the aim of providing integrated communication systems. Already deregulated in the 1980s, the telecommunications sector continued to be restructured by a focus on systems integration where corporations outsourced the management of their business computer networks to firms such as MCI and then WorldCom.

> Digital capitalism also is free to physically transcend territorial boundaries and, more important, to take economic advantage of the sudden absence of geopolitical constraints on its development. Not coincidentally, the corporate political economy is also diffusing more generally across the social field (Schiller, 1999:205).

Given their stake in being recognized as a leading systems integrator, it is not surprising that by decade's end WorldCom would define itself around the face of its information technology employees. WorldCom's generation D campaign positioned infotech workers as "in the know" employees who solve network problems with confidence.

One ad shown in 2000, follows a young WorldCom employee as he casually rides a scooter along the ramps and halls of a corporate campus, past fellow female and male employees, casually gathered in conversation or work, to his office space. One young woman sits perched atop a bookshelf with a laptop while three others informally lounge at a table drinking coffee (or herbal tea), all connected to their work via wireless laptops and handheld PDA's. There are no suits - no office dress code - in this office, because these are grown-up Gap kids.

They are not simply comfortable, but effortlessly at ease with themselves, with each other and their ultra-modern, communal office spaces. Since they are not hung up on appearances, individuation takes the form of the unconventional. These unconventional moments define the landscape of the new corporate workspace because there is a total absence of visible authority in these spaces. Scooter-man is iconically essential to defining this workspace. The scooter represents his mode of expression as he flows through the workspace. So too in the Akamai campaign (2000) the scooter is semiotically displayed front and center as indexically marking the new breed of worker in the network structured workspace. In fact, the Akamai ad poses one of their new breed information workers next to his desk that features both his fancy computer and a no less fancy high-tech titanium bicycle (cousin to the scooter). Each is an emblem of his identity, and his identity is emblematic of the company's personality. The scooter signifies an unalienated attitude to work, the intentional choice of a free thinking, value-producing individual who chooses to work for the kind of company that respects creativity by providing the casual informality of fluid, unregimented workspaces. Even the artwork on the wall, a series of three successive shots of scooter man entering and leaving the frame, signifies the playfulness, informality, and creative thinking that permeate these work spaces. The replication of the image into its own repetition offers a marker of what a postmodern business aesthetic looks like. Is this the new exemplar of the "work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction?" While the scooter signifies the antithesis of the cubicle - with the cube farm representing the bondage and restriction of work, and the scooter standing for the freedom of digital work - no less important in this semiotic narrative is the representational form that calls attention to the reproduction of the image.

We wonder why both Akamai and WorldCom, each seeking to hail the creative information technology worker, would feature such elaborately contrived visual constructs to show off the reproduction of an image within an image? Each campaign takes pleasure and pride in the repetitive character of visual reproductions. They are displayed as art, and as self-referential humor. In the WorldCom ad the pictures on the wall seem almost constituted in real time - a suggestion that wall art can in fact be continuously produced, or reproduced, electronically. The Akamai ad uses a similar, carefully manufactured semiotic puzzle that is visually sequenced to the words "the internet is faster because of us." What is the semiotic calculus here? Five screens mounted on tripods stand in a grassy meadow. A yellow train speeds past from left to right across the background, with the entire scene reproduced synchronically on each of the five scenes in real time. While it is easy enough to surmise that the purpose of this is to demonstrate a faster internet, the manner in which it is done prompts some self-reflexivity about seeing screens within screens.

Like Pepsi, WorldCom advertising extends the social category of generation beyond age as merely an ascriptive category. The Pepsi Generation defined as valuing fun, excitement and caffeinated leisure have been included into this nascent corporate class defined by its attitude to technology. This imagined generation is hailed as WorldCom's totem group. Blending tech skills, corporate vision, youthful exuberance and Gap style, Generation D thrives on techno-social change. Work is play - it's a "joyride."

> **They're young. And some just think that way. The people in companies that were born digital, Or reborn. As comfortable with data as the last generation was with the telephone, as long as they have the right set of tools, and the right company behind them**

While we conventionally think of a biography as a book length manuscript that covers a person's life from birth to death, here biography is hypersignified by a glance. We are positioned to imagine the rest. To be born digital is to be at ease with oneself and one's environment, to exhibit a certain habitus, ways of seeing and doing that are so deeply internalized they are experienced as natural, like being born a gentleman. However, the habitus of generation D trumps race, gender, and social class, even though signifiers of gender, race and class are overabundant, and their representations borrow on the bourgeois aesthetic of off-center portraiture to connote intelligence. A shared generational culture appears to shove aside social class as a classificatory device. Class connotes structure and

hindrance; generational culture suggests choices, movement and progress.

The serial montage is a cinematic structure commonly used by firms in the information technology sector - and seems particularly favored by firms that compete in the networking sector (e.g., Cisco, Akamai, WorldCom). The serial montage links snippets of statements made by multiracial (skin color), multicultural (signified by clothing styles), multiethnic, multi-accentual (accented English), and multiregional (both rural and urban backgrounds) speakers. Each subject can be conceived as a serial node in the communication network. Participants recite phrases in a repetitive formula that establishes a shared commitment to the corporate worldviews that endow them with meaning, purpose and opportunities. Supporting the metanarrative of the communications industry that free, open and fast communication eliminates all distinctions associated with race, gender, ethnicity, and social positioning, the serial montage constructs a landscape with nary a hint of hierarchy or power relations.

In The Internet Galaxy, Castells (2001) suggests that technical performance trumps race in the ideological world of Silicon Valley and dot.coms. Seriality may well reflect the organizational ideology of the communications industry while failing to account for nascent structural formations and practices in a virulently competitive corporate sector.

WorldCom's 2001 ads used the series to construct an emergent global social strata connected not by place but by totemism. Successful commodity advertising interpellates its target audience as if it is already part of the group constructed by the ad (Williamson 1978). The brand then assumes totemic status representing and embodying the ideal qualities of the imagined group. Successful brand construction correlates totemic identification to a logo. Thus, the Pepsi generation constructed an imaginary group that was fun-loving, youthful, and leisure-oriented, a group whose social coordinates are dictated less by social practice than by the aggregation of market research. In Baudrillard's terms, this kind of totemism is rooted in the death of the social. The totem is thus a specter in a dual sense, a ghostly reminder of what has been lost and an imaginative phantom of desires not yet realized. Like commodity advertising, corporate branding also attempts to give its logo totemic status by associating the imagined group with its brand. It simultaneously constitutes and is constituted by these branded characteristics. WorldCom positioned itself as a corporation that supports technological problem solvers unconstrained by hierarchy or structure. WorldCom's generation d campaign defined its employees as cool and confident, 'in the know' because they had committed themselves to an innovative corporation. Most importantly, it opened space for potential customers to participate in the characteristics correlated with generation d. WorldCom sold freedom from techno anxiety through feel good associations (unlike IBM which uses techno-terror to push up the anxiety quotient until the business person can only cry for help). Melodic, upbeat corporate techno background music further heightened the sense of confidence that radiates from the portraits. Gen D's know where the world is going and backed by WorldCom they are the one's taking it there.

The frames in this series are formulaically equivalent as posed portraits -- each subject directly addresses the camera in a tone infused with technological confidence. The world moves quickly across the background, but the portraiture that composes the foreground stays securely fixed. Hierarchy and authority seem non-existent, rather beside the point. Composed by their differences of dress, gender, ethnicity and location, this emergent subculture nonetheless speaks a common language: English with an accent, mixed with a few technical acronyms. Stop action photography creates the impression of a futuristic world juiced on speed. It also uses place and culture (signified by accent, appearance and background signifiers) to signify difference and diversity even while the ad proclaims the emancipation from the confinements of place and culture.

Euro Male voice: Generation d isn't about the country...
Female: It isn't about culture...
English female: It's about attitude...
Female: [first in German and then in English] I'm from Germany...
Male: "Je vie la France...
Female: I come from Indonesia...
Asian female: I'm from Oklahoma...
Male: Oklahoma?
Female: But we speak the same language...
Male voice: Digital...
Another male voice: ...and we make it easy to understand.

The effort at disentangling the constraints imposed by old expectations about the unity of place and culture takes several signifying forms. When a woman of Asian descent, wearing signifiers of an Asian culture, drawls "I'm from Oklahoma" the disjuncture between cultural signifiers is sufficiently incongruous that the following speaker questions

it. Wow, here truly is a liberated global society that permits people to move freely from one space to another, finding identity in a new group shaped by an attitude, a confident disposition toward digital technology. Another frame almost subliminally slips past as the name "WorldCom" and the address www.vote_democraticsociety.com appear on a wall as graffiti. No such website existed. The irony that the address of democratic society could be put into .com domain should not be allowed to go unnoticed, and let's not forget that WorldCom's financial collapse was rooted in old-fashioned fraud. Though these ads highlight flows -- of ideas, of information, of services, of commodities - they repress the reverse flow and accumulation of capital and the undemocratic ways that accumulation pools.

In the giddy euphoria that surrounded the explosive growth of the internet economy, the information technology worker seemed to have limitless opportunities. Companies aggressively competed for 'star' programmers, and many assumed that salaries throughout high tech would follow suit. However, with the shake out of the dotcom sector, the collapse of the tech market, and the increasing rationalization and integration of networks, this class may be turning into a new working class composed of cube farm info workers who experience mind-numbing computer work under the constant oversight of bosses, bureaucratic deadlines, and the always looming reengineering of jobs. As the entrepreneurs of the tech boom - Gates, Dell, Jobs, and Bezos - transformed their firms into ultra-competitive high-tech giants their rank and file have been inexorably turned into lesser-paid tech specialists. And it is by now a commonplace that software programming and call center jobs have migrated from the United States and Europe to India. The global search for cheap labor and subsequent downsizing extends well beyond manual labor as the search for cost savings moves up the infotech work chain.

The Two Faces of Rhizomatic Labor

However the WorldCom ads represent but one face of this technologically savvy stratum. A series of Peoplesoft ads in 1999 also stressed the incipient centrality of knowledge workers in the new economy. However, rather than celebrating an airbrushed portrait of Generation D, the Peoplesoft pitch is weighted in the darkened tones of worry and apprehension about the ceaseless waves of change that threaten to engulf those who remain static. The Peoplesoft representations stress the realpolitik of the new global capitalism by foregoing the fashionably multicoloured plumage of the new tech workers. Instead the Peoplesoft ads offer black and white lessons about the perils of failing to be ever vigilant. In the new corporate survival of the fittest, "Success today is network knowledge, intellectual capital. Inspire your people with the tools to collaborate. Nurture this and survive. Curtail it and become extinct." These are the new relations of production in the post-downsizing era, where flexibility demands an openness to an ever-evolving panoply of shifting partnerships and alliances based on innovation and collaboration.

Another Peoplesoft ad darkly counsels about the necessity of adjusting to the new social relations of production in an e-business economy.

> "This is your future - The next generation.
> They won't settle for life in cubicles.
> They will demand access to information to innovate, collaborate.
> Their branches will rupture your walls.
> Their only boss will be the best idea and it can come from anywhere.
> [pause for dramatic effect] Will they want to work for you or the competition?"

"Their branches will rupture your walls." Networking collaborators cannot co-exist with old-school corporate organizations and boundaries. It is almost as if this line was extracted from Deleuze and Guattari (1987) when they discuss the rhizome as the antithesis of "the tree" model of social organization "rooted" in hierarchical structures and linear thinking. Yet the Peoplesoft ad insists that the necessity of rhizomatic labor relations is a function of the stern determinism enforced by a capitalist economic competition that has already "cut down to the bone." Here we see the other side of capitalist social relations - not as opportunities for personal growth as such, but as the conditions made necessary by the shifting contradictions of Capital. Hence it is not surprising that this new class of worker is given no face at all, no personification, in the Peoplesoft campaign - they are what they are, a necessary human capital component in the value production chain.

Akamai is another company that operates a globally distributed network of servers to distribute Web content. Akamai ads closely resemble the WorldCom representations in the signifiers that have been selected (e.g., the scooter) as expressions of unconventional personality and the overall landscape of signification - a rhizomatic landscape fashioned to permit the expressivity of those who perform the mental labor that will spark the new information economy. Here we see flashing glimpses of high tech workspaces inhabited by multicultural portraits of the digital

generation - like their counterparts at WorldCom they appear supremely at ease with themselves, and by inference, with their work. Spaces are open and unbounded and authority structures are invisible, where knowledge workers are free to express themselves via uniquely constructed pastiches of ethnicity combined with punk disregard for all past traditions of self-presentation. In these landscapes suited to the expression of personality, work is apparently place diffused. And yet, if we look carefully we notice that like the portraits of Generation D, the faces and bodies that fashion value in an idea economy are more or less motionless, rooted in abstracted places. All sense of flow comes from the camera's movements and the video editor's contributions, such that the vividly colored backgrounds seem to be in motion. The environment is open and without walls or limits, contriving a Internet simulated world without hierarchy or the restrictions of power.

It might be anticipated that scientists and engineers would be represented in ways similar to the rhizomatic stratum of communications and computing specialists, but aside from their relative individuation and apparent autonomy vis-à-vis any top-down authority, corporate scientists are bound by their uniforms and their dedication to the values of discovery rather than concerns about self-expressive posturing. Beginning with the GE ads of the 1950s and 1960s, the corporate laboratory has come to occupy the center of the scientific world. Corporate ads picture scientific research and engineering as essential to progress and development in almost every sphere of life. "Our three hundred thousand employees create and design the technologies that promise a future without limits" (GE 2002). In this context, corporate ads are particular insistent about keeping exchange values hidden behind the generalized halo of public values. Whereas, consumer-goods ads invoke science as a kind of magic that yields new product benefits, corporate legitimacy requires that some connection be established between the labor of scientific research, capital investment, and new public goods (e.g., cures for disease, greater abundance of crops, more efficient extraction of energy resources). Scientific research tends to be situated in open architecture spaces. Research scientists are indicated not only by their stereotypic lab coats and their proximity to microscopes, test tubes, or other laboratory instruments, they are also shown in acts of scientific inscription as they seek solutions to problems by writing on transparent plexiglass panels that connote the futurism of holograms. In this regard, it is not uncommon to see scientific researchers and engineers placed within virtual veils of representational notations or illuminated three-dimensional holographic images that simulate the underlying objects of inquiry or the inscription devices that translate nature's patterns into technologies of control. Women are as likely as men to appear as research scientists in the ads, even though they are less likely than men to be employed as engineers or physical scientists by corporations. Minorities are also better represented imagistically in the roles of medical researchers and engineers than in the actual labor force. Like everyone else in the corporate economy, their work apparently is self-motivated, requiring no external authority; and it is pursued either individually or in dyads. What disappears from these scenes are the ways in which the processes of industrialization, proletarianization and commodification have restructured the relations of science.

Towards the Wireless Office

One immediate implication of laptop computers, the internet and wireless communication technologies for those who work in offices has been the possibility of new spatial arrangements for doing work. In the capitalist workplace this presents clear tensions between the possibilities afforded by workforce flexibility and the fears of what might happen if employees are not continuously monitored for output. The same forces that untether employees also countenance keystroke counts. Whereas, the rhizomatic stratum might be encouraged to work at their own creative pace, less trust is afforded to those who are considered more readily replaceable.

An ad for Haworth Office Furniture titled "The ins and outs of 21st century business" offers an instructive ideological expression of the changing parameters of corporate office work technologies in the new economy. The ad is structured as a series of semiotic binaries - what is "out" and what is "in." Interpreting the ad, we see that pretentious hierarchical forms based on access to closed offices are "out," supplanted by open, collaborative and hence necessarily more egalitarian team spaces. The inefficiency of paper waste delivered to bureaucratically separated desk spaces has been supplanted by cool, digital efficiencies of e-mail as a means of working in a distributed manner. Airplane travel linking geographic spaces is negated in favor of electronic video conferencing. "Walls are out. Wheels are in." The static formula of cubicles and divisions amongst employees is replaced by the flexibility of open architectures.

The hell of being cubicle bound is humorously exaggerated in a 3Com ad from the year 2000. Sharing a tightly enclosed space with an overweight co-worker who makes no effort to muffle annoying body noises - sniffling, nose

blowing, snorting, clearing of sinuses - a young woman winces and grimaces in revulsion with every escalating noise. 3Com's solution is to go wireless: "Simple sets you free." Depictions of wireless freedom began in the mid-1990s with Sharp and MCI and became widespread in recent years in ads for computer and telecommunications companies - e.g., Winstar, Compaq, Intel, SBC, Microsoft and AT&T. Intel illustrates its injunction to "unwire" by showing people dragging their desks and chairs just about to any venue - from the middle of a football field to the middle of a loading dock to the edge of a three-meter diving platform. One's work becomes spatially unbound. Indeed, a Winstar ad for its "Office.com" ("The new way to work") distributed computing service featured a jogging financial manager who has an idea for a new pricing model. He stops in his tracks and proceeds to work through the mathematical proof for the pricing model on the side of a dirty truck with his finger before rushing to a conveniently located Office.com outlet to send his idea back to the office.

In "Wireless Solutions for a Portable Planet," an Aether ad features a small startup company consisting of four twenty somethings riding around in their convertible. The narrative quickly suggests they are competing for a contract with a large - and smug - corporation. The semiotic binary is easy to follow: wireless, youthful startup in red convertible versus large, fixed, colorless corporate entity; and the winner is equally obvious. The ad is punctuated with an aggressive symbolization. Having just won this nameless and abstract, but apparently lucrative contract, the convertible drives up to a stretch limo version of the Hummer - says one of the women, "I thought we could use a bigger office."

But the same technological forces that promote flexibility, mobility and freedom, can also be used to discipline, monitor, enforce and control.

A 2000 Nextel ad speaks to this latter issue with a story about two corporate suits in Hong Kong. One man declares that what he loves about being in Hong Kong is that there is "no leash…no way for the office to keep tabs on you." At that moment his companion receives a phone call. When the wannabe slacker asks "what is that," his companion says "Nextel worldwide - works everywhere we do." The first man retorts, "Well that just means you're gonna have to work everywhere, Bob!" To which the second man replies, "Actually it means you do, I just got promoted, you work for me." As he snickers, we can almost feel the prison door slamming shut, but only for those who aren't savvy enough to use the most efficient communications technology - those who use it first, get promoted. First, the privilege of corporate work sets you free, then the technology catches up and there is nowhere to hide.[5]

Stories of Technology, Gender & Mobility in the New Economy

By the late 1990's some ads hailed female executives, addressing questions of both success and obstacles on the climb up the corporate ladder. A 1999 Micron Electronics ad takes place in a corporate cube farm. In this ad promoting the high technology profile of Micron, a computer maker, the action is controlled by an angry young female employee who freezes the scene, grabs her boss's golf club and proceeds to smash through the old social relations of the workplace -- including an allusion to the "glass ceiling." Apparently, she is able to smash down old tyrants and obsolete technology, along with brittle old barriers and inefficiencies, because the new revolution in telecommunications and computing makes the prevailing ways of doing things anachronistic.

The scene opens with the hum of office noises (phones and office equipment) and a cyan-tinted shot of a large corporate office complex defined by partitioned cubicles spreading as far as the camera will let us see. It is business as usual as male executives move along the corridor, briefcases in hand. The camera cuts to a blond young woman inside a cubicle as she slams her hands down on her desk and pushes herself out of her chair. "I will not do this!" Her face is a study in frustration and anger, as she asserts her refusal to work under these conditions, and her refusal freezes all action in the office space. "I will not be a cog in a machine," she declares as she seizes a golf putter from the hands of a frozen executive (presumably her boss) who had been strolling through the office, club in hand, when our protagonist stopped time. She marches purposively across the room and swings viciously at a conventional computer monitor, smashing it as she begins delivering her manifesto: "I will not accept the obsolete!" Making the boss's golf club her assault weapon of choice symbolically captures, and reverses, the privilege of the 'old boy's club' that runs the corporate show.

"Keep your corporate ladder," she defiantly asserts as she takes another violent swing at what seems to be a ceiling panel, once again shattering it irreparably. Using the master's tool (golf club) to attack the notorious "glass ceiling" that keeps women from getting their just due in salaries or positions, certainly makes a vivid metaphor for

'smashing the glass ceiling.' The reference to "empty mission statements" is a caustic swipe at faddish corporate public-relations lip-service regarding product excellence and respect for employee work satisfaction. By alluding to the flowery corporate rhetoric of mission statements, this Micron Electronics ad addresses the same cynical impulse targeted by Nike ads -- forget the talk, let's see you walk the walk. But this is hardly an anti-mission statement - despite its angry tone, it resonates with much of the rhetoric about corporate culture. Though the Micron Electronics ad represents an attack on a generic corporate workplace, representative mission statements and corporate philosophy weave together the issues condensed into symbolic form in the Micron ad. The buzzwords that predominate in statements of corporate philosophy include the "new rules," (e.g., open architecture, working outside the box, and non-hierarchical culture).

As she spits out her fury and her anger, she approaches her boss, still immobilized in time and place, and snarls directly into his face to, "Keep your empty mission statements. I will never play by the old rules again!" The boss's head then breaks and crumbles into pieces, his face cracking like a plaster mask from a Magritte painting. This image figuratively suggests a crumbling of his authority due to her defiance.

A male voiceover declares that "The rules of business have changed and Micron PC's featuring Intel Pentium II processors are the digital slingshots you need to win." The old boy's club is dead thanks to Intel and Micron technologies that ostensibly give voice to the refusal to acquiesce to alienated work in the archaic structures of your father's corporate organization.

Does technology allow a worker to rebel successfully against the capitalist impulse to transform her into "a cog in a machine?" How does the technology of semi-conductors blunt that impulse? Just how does her "digital slingshot" work? Though the ad explicitly names its computers using the Pentium II chips as "the digital slingshots you need to win," how does a digital mode of production pose contradictions for the hegemony of the corporate Goliath? This ad, nonetheless, heralds nothing less than a reordering of capitalist relations of production because of changes in the mode of production (technology). "New Rules. New Tools."

An allegory about power in the corporate workplace, this ad suggests a story about a revolution from below, in this case waged by a woman denied leading edge technology or her rightful place in the hierarchy of responsibility, discretion, power and rewards. It offers a cautionary tale of what happens when the rhizomatic wannabe is treated as human capital (a factor of production) and denied the opportunity to fully express herself in her work. Was this a story of empowerment, or a cautionary tale for corporate executives of what happens when a company doesn't keep current? Disregarding new technologies and their organizational implications can generate crises of morale, productivity, and even control. We are not sure whether one can build a new house with the Master's tools, but in this story, the Master's tool (the golf club) can be turned to tear down the walls, ceilings and power structures of his building, while the new tools apparently belong to 'everywoman.'

Time Bind Mom - A Wireless Life in balance

A 1998 AT&T ad opens with scenes calculated to evoke the everydayness of home life, bringing forth the feel and texture of real interactions from the backstage area of daily family life. Hyperreal encoding in combination with a TV cartoon soundtrack playing in the background sets the interpretive tone for the story. A woman scrambles to finish getting dressed, putting on her makeup, and gathering together her portfolio materials for a meeting, while her three girls are variously engaged with breakfast. The oldest prepares eggs, while the baby plays with food containers from an open refrigerator door, and the four-year old disinterestedly spoons her cereal onto the table.

> The oldest girl calls out: "Mom, I can't find my skates."
> Mom calls back, "Look under the table," before adding a reminder about "No TV all day, remember?"
> Daughter replies: "Our babysitter watches TV all day."

The mother-daughter exchange regarding TV watching rules is suggestive of their dynamic. The mother attempts to reinvoke her rule about restricting television viewing while she is gone. Her daughter's rejoinder challenges the fairness of a rule that seems arbitrary (and unenforceable) insofar as the babysitter disregards it. As she makes her case, Mom opens the door to reveal the babysitter who has just been 'outed' for breaking Mom's no-TV rule. Mom is too hurried to concern herself with this breach. Viewers are apt to note the blank look on the babysitter's face. This 'teenager look' lends a note of authenticity to the ad, and is an important means of 'hailing' the intended audience who may already recognize similar looks from their own experiences. These are the landscapes of daily life. Amidst tricycles and bicycles strewn along the hallway, the babysitter leans against the wall, listening, but uninvolved, while

the baby wanders away from the refrigerator, still undressed. By allowing the mundane to remain mundane, a kind of visible background noise captures the everydayness that frames these relationships. The ensuing dialogue however cuts to the heart of their drama.

> Oldest daughter: "Mom, why do you always have to go to work?"
> Mom: "It's called food, video, skates..."
> Oldest daughter: "Can we go to the beach?"
> Mom: "Not today honey, I've got a meeting with a very important client."
> Four-year old daughter asks plaintively: "Mom, when can I be a client?" and then rests her chin on her hands to signify sadness.

The child's question sends an emotional dagger of guilt through Mom. Her facial expression reflects the tension she feels as she puzzles over what to do. Here is the classic tradeoff. A parent works longer hours away from the family to provide for her children (so they can have food, video, skates) but then regrets the time not spent with them. The advertiser has left open interpretive room as to whether this woman parents alone or not. We think she is a single mom. Certainly, women who try to raise children and compete successfully in the managerial ranks of the corporate world face a double whammy, doing double duty in both spheres.

While Mom declines her daughter's initial request that they go to the beach due to her job commitments, the ensuing question from her younger daughter about "when can I be a client?" prompts a guilt-induced reassessment, as she realizes she has given her "client" a higher priority than her "daughter." Her guilt feelings are heightened by her children's sad, pleading looks. She is impelled to consider another way of reconciling the conflicting demands she is being asked to meet. We see her eye catch sight of the cell phone upon the counter -- the solution, of course, lies in her AT&T cell phone! She announces that "You have five minutes to get ready for the beach or I'm going without you," and the girls scream with glee as Cyndi Lauper sings "Girls just wanna have fun." This ad speaks directly to working mothers about how to reconcile the tensions in their lives -- how to be loving, and available, parents to their children and still fulfill their career duties and aspirations?

AT&T presents the issue in this sympathetic narrative, and then offers a way of transcending this guilt. Career women can, if they are agile of mind and spirit (and who wouldn't want to be?), meet everyone's expectations while harmonizing the interaction of work life and family life. They can accomplish this if they choose the appropriate brand of technology. In the reunification of self, family, and business, AT&T portrays its telecommunications technology as an instrument of liberation, literally an instrument that frees her up to be in one place (the beach with her laughing kids), while also inhabiting another space (the phone call/meeting with her client). The conflict between work and home/family obligations has been vanquished when Mom answers her phone on the beach and here four-year old daughter screams out, "Hey, everybody, it's time for the meeting!" It's a grand new world, where Mom's can have personal and professional happiness because as the tagline declares: "AT&T -- It's all within your reach."

This ad amplifies an issue raised by Arlie Russell Hochschild in The Time Bind: When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work (1998). Not just working women, but working fathers as well, are prone to feel guilt about being away from their children, but they also feel tension about being away from their jobs, or letting down an employer. The AT&T ad ostensibly addresses the structural conflict that Juliet Schor refers to as the "time squeeze." But if we superimpose Hochschild's interpretation over this ad, we might see the guilt relationship in another way as well.

Middle class culture claims to prioritize family above all else in our lives. So why then does it seem to be so difficult to find a balance between work and family life? Hochschild thinks the problem might be that many of us are more ambivalent than we would like to openly admit about spending time with family. Why do employees experience a "time squeeze"? Until recently, corporations presumed a world where men's careers mattered and women stayed home to keep house and raise kids. But that world has begun to change, and if the corporation Hochschild studied is representative, the time squeeze is no longer due solely to the company's failure to appreciate the squeeze placed on working women. Even though the corporation she studied had flexible hours (including job-sharing options and part-time arrangements) and family-friendly policies, she found that both ambitious employees seeking promotions, as well as lower level, and hence more easily replaceable workers, tend not to take advantage of these options. The ambitious understand that time spent away from work can diminish their chances of advancement in rank and salary. At the other end of the job spectrum, less skilled workers have job security fears that are not entirely assuaged by the firm's policies.

Working parents in dual-career families have been spending more and more time at work - not simply because

they face growing work loads, or even because they're afraid of losing their jobs (though certainly in a downsizing environment that fear cannot be ruled out). Hochschild suggests some are fleeing the pressures and uncertainties of home life and escaping to work, where they can feel in control, or at the least avoid the emotional dramas played out at home. Hochschild reports that though they later tend to feel guilt about this method of avoidance, working parents sometimes prefer the social side of the office to the boredom of household chores, to quarreling or whining kids, or to confronting unresolved emotional conflicts at home.

Hochschild sees the "time bind" as a chain of relationships. Corporate employees may feel a need to spend more hours at work to support their families. This, in turn, prompts increased stress at home, which many parents react to by finding reasons to spend still more time at work to escape the tension at home. These self-contradictory relations contribute to what Hochschild terms the "third shift" -- the time parents spend repairing the damage generated by their compulsion to work. This dynamic was probably not new to the 1990s, but rather endemic to the social and cultural contradictions generated by middle class socialization practices that demand both a commitment to self-achievement and an obligation to the goals of familial intimacy. These don't necessarily fit together, and Hochschild calls attention to what many middle class ideologues would prefer to repress: employees frequently choose to work because they find it more rewarding than time spent in the emotionally messy arena of family life.

Going Up: Networked Mobility in the Flat Hierarchy

A 1998 AT&T ad tells a story about the speed at which business must operate today if it is to be competitive at the highest levels. This story about using communications technology to fine tune organizational efficiency is told via a success story about the career fast track in an era of distributed organizations.

Matt, a young executive hoping to climb the ladder of success, enters an elevator occupied by a bike messenger. At the next elevator stop a female supervisor/manager enters the elevator, saying "Matt, got your e-mail. Vancouver. Genius." The song, "I want to take you higher," by Sly and the Family Stone kicks in as she tells him that she has already begun the process of moving this idea through a distributed, and synchronized, division of labor as the screen cuts to a shot of a computer screen with the label "Linking Company Offices." On the computer screen appears an organizational flow chart and pop-up images of managers in the Seattle and Portland offices.

Another male manager enters the elevator at the next floor and cheerily informs Matt about the progress his idea is making through the organization. "Hey Matt, idea's a hit in the Northwest. Expect love letters. I've got purchasing checking suppliers." Reinforcing these points, we see in visual counterpoint the diagrammatic network connections being made across the network and a computer software application "linking with suppliers." It seems that everyone in this organization knows instantaneously of Matt's idea and its movement. The celebration continues as colleagues greet him on successive elevator stops, with comments that suggest successive steps in the process of vetting the idea. "Specs sounded pretty Matt." "Legal's putting it through the mill." Confirmation that Matt's career is on the ascent comes when a senior member of the firm referred to as "Counselor," greets Matt with a casually bemused smile, "Looking a little golden this morning son."

As he reaches the ground floor and starts to exit, a young woman stops him, "uh uh, you're wanted up top. Client briefing. Your Vancouver idea." As the elevator carries him toward his new status, the young executive turns and exchanges glances with the bike messenger. His success is acknowledged by an approving nod from a bike messenger who exudes quiet subcultural coolness and confidence. Matt's bright idea has been recognized and he is on the rise. The system works when AT&T technology is chosen to electronically link all aspects of its business efficiently with suppliers and customers, thus streamlining organizational decision-making. In the landscapes of the new, networked capitalism, the best ideas win out because the ultimate arbiter is speed to market. The announcer inquires, "Want to take your business to the next level?" while from below, we watch as the elevator ascends upward through the elevator shaft into the bright light of corporate salvation.

The story is told through a series of juxtapositions. As a narrative device, the elevator might seem better suited to an era of vertically integrated bureaucratic organizations, but here it is used to tell a story about a geographically dispersed global corporation that has reshaped itself via the adoption of AT&T's network communication systems to span geography and division of labor. As a spatial metaphor, the image of the elevator suggests vertical movement through the space of the built environment. Here the elevator lends semiotic weight to multiple signifying agendas. It is not simply an elevator, but a vintage elevator marked by art deco aesthetics that signal a golden age of business in the architectural era of high modernism. The bas-relief bronze motifs are reminiscent of the aesthetic of Metropolis, suggestive of an era of material substance. Digital innovation does not appear to imperil the bourgeois heritage of

business, nor does it require the negation of classic infrastructure. The elevator's mechanical functionality is visually highlighted and juxtaposed with the digital flows of information, making it a convenient measure of the rapidity with which ideas move in the new organization. From new idea to implementation in the length of time it takes him to ride the elevator down. Moreover, the buttons of the elevator still offer a familiar indexical metric of individual mobility, going to the 50th floor is the ultimate indicator of successfully making it to the top.

Images of organizational flow charts and screens of software functionality are intercut into the elevator narrative to illustrate how network connectivity works in a distributed work environment. The commodity premise here is the linked organization -- the coordination of functions and decision-making when employees are dispersed geographically in large global firms. This implies a business organization with relatively few bureaucratic levels of decision-making to go through. While this aims to demonstrate the virtues of a "flat" organization, the ad still locates authority and reward structure at the top. And if instantaneity of communications yields transparency of decision-making, it does by keeping authority visually absent yet panoptic.

And yet the cultural authority that affirms the fairness and rationality of the narrative outcome comes from below - from the bike messenger. This twist is worth considering. The other primary figure in this story is the bike messenger, though he never utters a word. At ad's end his nod of approval is crucial to recognizing and validating the achievement of the young executive on the rise. In the post-Fordist urban political economy the bike courier offers a flexible means of circulating and delivering small batches of information as corporations downsize, outsource and spatially decentralize. And yet, like all other elements of a post-Fordist universe, the courier is disposable, replaceable, and expendable. The significance of his look of approval is contingent on our acceptance of his symbolic presence as the antithesis of corporate culture - a hipster with long hair, a goatee and tinted shades who knowingly observes, but does not participate. In the folklore of postmodern urban spaces, the bike courier has been constructed as a non-conformist outsider - a risk-taking renegade who refuses to be tamed by the rules of wage labor; the physical nature of their work permits them to symbolize freedom. Unbound by chains of corporate regimens, his look affirms that unconventional and innovative thinking will be recognized and adopted where it works.

Manufacturing Labor in Postmodern Discourse

With the exception of automobile and truck ads, manufacturing labor has continued to disappear from the landscape of work. The infrequency of traditional factory imagery corresponds to the steady loss of manufacturing jobs in the United States over recent decades. Sometimes indistinguishable from rural labor, such representations are nevertheless more common than farmers who are becoming extinct across the advertising landscape. By contrast, during the 1970s and 1980s, though their numbers diminished rapidly, the farmer remained an icon for all the virtues of American workers. Nostalgic representations of farmers and ranchers have not completely departed the scene; it's just that circa 2000, the unadorned salt-of-the-earth work ethic now competes with another rationale for introducing the image of a farmer or rancher - to demonstrate how advanced technologies can sustain an otherwise declining way of life by making it more efficient. This is the story told by Microsoft about the small ranch-oriented, rural town of Lusk, Wyoming where enlightened citizens are adopting advanced communications technologies to preserve a bucolic and romanticized country way of living. Farm communities have suffered enormously in recent years - hit hard by the epidemic of bankruptcies amongst small farmers, the loss of jobs in rural industries, the erosion of tax bases, dismal schools, and the hemorrhaging of the best and brightest to sites of greater opportunity.

> Male voiceover: "This is Lusk, Wyoming. Cows outnumber people here 100 to 1. The thing that isn't apparent about Lusk is it's wired. Lusk has strung fiber optic cable for the future of high speed internet. The schools have 320 computers for 500 kids. Home businesses and PCs are common. Why? They're practical people. They want to talk to the outside world using technology. They want to save their ranches with technology. They want to talk to the kids who've left and keep more kids from leaving by having the technology. They want to save their small town and keep it exactly the way it is, and they're using everything they can think of to do that. Technology is a tool. Software is a tool. These are the dreams it's made for, and that's why we make it."

The Microsoft narrative is interesting insofar as it warps the Marxian model of social change. Forget the contradictions between the social relations of production and the mode of production - we now live in the era of re-engineering, proclaims Microsoft. Not just companies can be re-engineered, now communities can be too. Want to hold on to a form of social and cultural life that is no longer consonant with the macro political economic forces

of the day, then invest in the very technology that threatens to engulf you. Or perhaps, we should read the Microsoft narrative in the opposite direction, as a shrewd neo-Marxian assessment of what can happen when new technologies are leveraged to take advantage of emergent political-economic contradictions.

Factories are few and far between in corporate ads as sites of production especially when compared with other sites of value production - scenes of corporate headquarters or corporate research labs. The only consistency of factory representation occurs in corporate automaker ads where nearly identical scenes of capital-intensive production facilities appear in ads for GM, Saturn, Ford, Mercedes, Acura, Honda, Hyundai and Toyota. In these ads, automated computer systems control precision technologies that regulate the production process, while autoworkers are given cameo appearances. Spotless factories gleam and shine like the cars they produce, the site for a graceful ballet of meticulously choreographed movements. Production is turned into an aesthetic -- a fireworks display of sparks explicitly proclaimed as art and tended by occasional workers who display the exactitude of technicians or the sensitivity of artists. As might be predicted, these ads are more about the manufacture of desire than the manufacture of industrial goods.

Ads for GM and Saturn actually stress their "partnership" with the UAW as it speaks both to their general profile of corporate citizenship and to questions of quality production. Toyota ads celebrate their new investments in the US with similar ads that include close-up shots of solemn autoworkers (in this case non-union) devoted to their tasks in the assembly of small trucks. One would never guess from these images that such capital-intensive vehicle assembly plants have deskilled this work, or that these men and women are laboring for relatively less than their historical predecessors. In fact, the whole tenor of the Toyota campaign is to demonstrate that foreign capital in the United States creates new jobs (200,000) and sustains the nostalgic image of the American landscape.

The bottom left image from Saturn (1995) represents the sincerity of unalienated labor, and a nostalgia for a past mode of labor made better by enlightened corporate capital. The bottom right image from Datek Online (2000) represents the death of industrial labor. Whereas Saturn endorsed the autonomy of labor as the best way of serving consumer interests, Datek depicts the interests of labor as antagonistic to consumer interests which are better served by the electronic annihilation of the industrial model.

As a productive force, labor has lost its Promethean connotations, supplanted by smiley-faced service symbols (see Wal-Mart), computer controlled robotics, or numbed apparitions that impassively function according to script. The face of labor as heroic - the image of larger-than-life labor capable of conquering nature (and enshrined in the imagery of socialist realism) - has retreated from the site of production. Instead, the heroic profile of labor is delimited to images that hail a masculine demographic that buys pickup trucks. Ford Truck ads hail the traditional heavy labor of hardhats, construction workers, railroad workers, machine repair, welding, and men who tow or demolish - all jobs that depend on muscle and calloused hands. Close-up shots of unsmiling, unblinking, weathered faces speak to the pride, integrity and toughness of such labor and give the impression that such men take no orders or directives from any boss. The men who inhabit the mythical landscape of "Ford Country" are integrated racially and geographically, just as much rural as deindustrialized. The space of production for this portion of the working class, given the fact that the ads are for trucks, is primarily outdoors.

Though working class jobs associated with the previous mode of industrial labor have generally disappeared, the imagery of an industrial labor force and the conditions associated with it persist on the margins, usually as a pejorative. Industrial imagery is caricatured in Datek Online ads to create the semiotic opposite to the instantaneous electronic circuitry that Datek claims to operate. The stock trade at competing online brokers is conceptualized as a material paper object received via a mechanical chute as an "incoming order" and then processed. An archaic assembly line follows a tedious subdivision of tasks so that "your order to buy or sell a stock simply gets handed from one middle man to the next." When the lunch whistle blows and everyone files out of the room, we are prompted to realize just how slow and laborious this process is compared to the instantaneity that Datek associates with its own electronic circuits. The gray model of industrial organization is presented as antiquated and outmoded, not just because of the industrial model, but because that model relied on alienated labor to execute tasks. Datek claims to offer superior efficiency by eliminating mechanically robotic human labor mired in stagnant, non-productive social customs and routines.

Outsourcing the Labor Search

A central tenet of flexible accumulation is the need to adjust labor supply to the circumstances at hand. The

effort to reduce fixed labor costs and the long term commitments of health care benefits has led to abandoning manufacturing plants in the United States as well as the movement towards using temporary labor for light manufacturing as well as office work. Since the inception of capitalism, labor has been a commodity, but with the dotcom frenzy of the late 1990s came the invention of the online employment agency. Such firms sought a niche in the logic of corporate concentration and globalization - they delocalized labor markets, and offered to outsource the organization, coordination and management of the hiring process so that client firms can outsource their labor requirements as well as downsizing their own in-house personnel staffs.

Companies that advertise in this space may seek to appeal to employers or potential employees. The pitch varies accordingly. When addressing employers the stress is more likely on recruitment issues -- on managing an orderly and efficient process that identifies the appropriate skills while assuring a dependable and reliable supply of labor when needed. While this is generally a deadly serious matter for employers, the ads frequently lean toward a more humorous tone of voice. Accountemps promotes its expertise in "specialized financial staffing" by making fun of a whiney male executive who is outflanked by a more savvy female executive who knows who to call to get the job done. EDS advertises its experience in IT outsourcing by illustrating the perils of grabbing homeless people off the street to fill temporary IT staffing needs. Or when Hotjobs.com wants to impress upon employers the scientific precision of their panoptic sorting process in "pinpointing" the most appropriate job candidates, they opt to buffer the Taylorism of their pitch by sewing together a stylized pastiche of archived training film footage.

> Woman's voiceover: "Look potential in the eye. Searching for job candidates that measure up? Let us assist. The hot jobs database let's you gather and inspect only the best candidates. Our easy to use technology allows you to pinpoint the people with precisely the training you need, and enables you to manage the entire hiring process. You can even update and refresh job postings as your needs change. So if you're looking to enlist the best Call 1.877.hot.jobs"

When it comes to supplying manual labor, however, the visual tone becomes more sunny and sincere. Labor Ready is a multinational sourcer of unskilled labor. Reflecting their point that "Not all temps type" this ad constructs an orchestrated montage of energetic working images that include janitorial services, catering, loading and unloading, unskilled construction, waste hauling and disposal, maid service, landscaping, window washing, and agricultural field labor.

> Male voiceover: "No matter what your business, if you need to move it, clean it, cater it, build it up or tear it down, you can use Labor Ready temporary labor. Just call 1-800-24-LABOR or order on line at laborready.com and you'll get all the help you need. You can find good help these days. "Labor Ready. Dependable Temporary Labor."

The Labor Ready website is more direct about what they offer. "We help companies turn on-demand labor into a strategic advantage. No matter what the job, no matter how many extra hands you need, our team can show you how deploying the right workers can cut costs, increase efficiency, expand revenue opportunities, and make your life easier."

The appeal to potential job candidates is about finding a future that is not alienated, by finding a meaningful job worthy of you! As labor markets become corporatized and globalized, these ads depict the negotiation of labor markets as hostile and perilous spaces that few can navigate without the aid of a branded online site to clear a path. Agencies that offer to create a competitive advantage in labor markets include the largest online employment agencies -- Monster.com, Hotjobs.com, Thingamajob, and K-Force -- and they seek to signify the limitations imposed by boring and alienating jobs, as well as opportunities for more satisfying lives. In this dotcom market niche it was imperative that ads differentiate the brand identity of the firm, so the ways in which they represented alienation varied substantially.

An ad for Hotjobs.com reprises the vision of industrial work as equivalent to being held in a Soviet-era gulag work camp. The grim surroundings of factory work and conveyor belts are amplified by a melancholic song about dreams of rainbows ("Rainbows are visions, but only illusions.") that ends with the vague hope that someday there will be a better life.

The advertising for Thingamajob presents a critique of work in the corporate political economy. While the voiceover lays out a critique of bureaucratic rationalization and commodification in corporate labor markets, the visual representations offer a bleak vision reminiscent of the Apple Macintosh 1984 ad amid the aesthetic of the movie, Brazil.

> Female voiceover: "You are not a number

You are not a nameless resume on a faceless website
You are not corporate cannon fodder
You are not a cog in a machine.
Your destiny will not be determined by a keystroke
You are not a disposable commodity.
You are a human being
Need a better job?
Connect with a counselor at Thingamajob.com
Life 2.0 begins here."

Shaved heads tattooed with barcodes signify the objectification of workers in scenes that create a grimly standardized vision of being a nameless, faceless cog. Movements are regimented -- strictly controlled, over-disciplined and standardized -- and the forbidding space in which they move is without color or any emotional vibrancy. As the manifesto builds to the declaration that "you are a human being" one shaved head break ranks. In the Hotjobs.com and Thingamajob.com ads the existing work environment is presented as a deformation of the opportunity to have one's personality realized through the activity of work. These ads, the first in the industrial sector and the second in the office sector, do not suggest some sort of structural revolution that will yield unalienated jobs, rather they offer a lukewarm hope (illusion) that something better will come along for the isolated individual.

If the work environment looks inhospitable, so too does the job search process until one secures the assistance of trained specialists. K-force.com, a "specialty staffing firm" that concentrates on matching the staffing needs of Fortune 100 firms with the resumes of professionals seeking employment in information technology, finance and accounting, human resources, legal, and engineering, depicts a perilous Blade Runner image of internet job sites patrolled by con artists, hustlers, and duplicitous hucksters ready to take advantage of you. Step through a door to your future job, and you just might find yourself falling, nightmare like, to a barren desert floor. Another ad for kforce.com boosts the fear factor as it ominously depicts the competition for jobs ("It's you against him, against her, and who knows who else? All going for the same job. So what's going to set you apart?") in a space where you don't know your competition, in a space where employers simply see faceless resumes.

In the first k-force ad, the street hustler's rap is "I got hot jobs, cool jobs, jobs that are absolute monsters." This a symbolic swipe at its better-known competitor, monster.com. Though one can infer references to the alienation of labor from monster.com's ads, Monster offers the cheeriest and most optimistic appraisal of what is possible in the current job environment. While their initial ads offered cynical assessments of work as a necessary evil, their more recent ads are narratives of encouragement and celebrations of the possibilities for achieving self-realization.

Male voiceover: ""Don't think of your next job as your next job
Think of it as a long term life enhancement upgrade."

It is curious however, that like hotjobs.com, monster.com opts to invoke software metaphors to describe the relationship between a new job and one's life chances. Each ad uses the metaphor to give a positive spin. And the metaphor seems apt enough insofar as these are online employment agencies, but the metaphor is not unequivocal as it frames the individual's life history. Software version upgrades are notoriously short-lived, certainly never a promise of long term happiness; they are always subject to obsolescence. Life 2.0 is inherently unstable as a "life enhancement upgrade."

The Missing World Poor

The great disparity in wealth that structures global inequality vanishes with nary a trace in these ads. As might be expected, television ads contain few references to the world's poor. Not only are the material conditions of poverty kept out of sight in advertising, even the relationship as such is denied by how the ads frame their subjects. The structures of inequality vanish, as do all modes of exploitation. Ads insulate elites from nonelites, and keep wealthy individuals in safe havens. These elites travel through the space of non-places, spaces that are generally depicted as desirable because they are devoid of social contact. In the social world as refracted through the lens of advertising, elites and poor may be even more segregated than in everyday life. Occasionally, very occasionally, an ad slips up and reveals the relational terms of this separation as in a 1998 ad for Korean Air that juxtaposed idealized images

of field laborers against the luxury of their first class accomodations where clients are seen enjoying the fine foods made from the crops just picked.

When the poor are represented, they are not usually depicted as active subjects, but as tragic figures aided by the benevolence of capital, usually in the form of charity. Abstracted from conditions of poverty, the poor in developing countries are sometimes presented as the beneficiaries of corporate largess and scientific (medical) research. Neither market forces nor corporate capital appear to contribute to poverty in any systematic way. There is a curious absence of neoliberal evangelism in these ads - no moralizing about how market forces will save the poor from corrupt regimes. The landscapes of globalization presented here bear no signs of structural adjustment austerity programs and the harm they inflict on local populations in an effort to stabilize currencies and attract foreign capital. There are no hints of maquiladora zones, nor wide-angle shots of ever expanding urban slums, no global circuits of prostitution, no civil strife, no environmental destruction. Instead corporate brands (e.g., Philip Morris, American Express) represent themselves as the conscience of the world, devoted where necessary to enhancing the lives of the poor whose circumstances remain unexplained.

Truly this is a simulacra, for it has no original. The referent is imaginary. Even the measures of conservative organizations such as the World Bank, flawed as they are, indicate that of the 4.8 billion people living in the countries of the developing world in 2003, 1.2 billion existed in extreme poverty (defined by the World Bank as living on $1 per day or less) and 2.8 billion live in poverty ($2 a day). Poverty of this magnitude breeds disease, malnutrition, starvation, illiteracy, and overpopulation, and these consequences are amplified by the severity of the gap between rich and poor. In 2003, the richest fifth of the world's population received 85% of the total world income, while the poorest fifth received just 1.4% of the global income." (http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0908762.html)

Portrtaits of Third World Poverty

Inhabitants of the third and fourth worlds -- those places on the planet that have been systematically underdeveloped, thanks to the legacy of colonialism, capitalist imperialism, and now globalization -- do occasionally make an appearance in corporate ads. Bringing a smile to Africans is the subject of a one-minute 1998 Crest ad that stresses the importance of educating the poor in developing nations about dental hygiene. Shot in Zimbabwe, the ad offers testimony about how well this humanitarian strategy is working. Rotting teeth have long been an easily identifiable signifier of poverty, and while a big bright smile might not erase poverty, it does seem to erase one of poverty's most painful and ugly markers.

The Crest ad is unusual in that it identifies the geographical and social location of its subjects, unlike the more generically abstracted images of third world peoples, such as the silhouetted image of women carrying baskets on their heads (See Figure 46). Where access to the public sphere is through television advertising, even non-profit organizations compete with similar discursive abstractions.

For example, an ad for Children International introduced an undernourished, poorly clothed child who is named 'Michelle.' The naming process emotionalizes her, encouraging viewers to connect to her plight, so that the narrator, Walter Coppage, can make a plea for donations to help this girl and the other children pictured. The children don't smile, play, or run. Their saddened faces and tattered clothing draw attention to a body language of helplessness. Often depicted clinging to an adult or some dull inanimate object, they have no energy. Colorless, lifeless slums in the backgrounds remain unidentified - they simply permit us to locate the world's poor 'overseas' in grim zones of poverty apparently unconnected to any political economic forces or social relations that structurally premise their poverty.

An emotionally powerful, photorealist representation of poverty appears in an advocacy ad by Mt. Carmel Baptist Church. Combining an African-American gospel song with images of agony and suffering produces a heartrending montage of gaunt and starving children, children with missing limbs, crippled, alone, and in tears. Touching as this ad is, it remains an exercise in universal humanism that privileges an idealist response - "We got to love to get along in this world." By decontextualizing suffering, by taking it out of its historical conditions, the horror of these images invites not a political solution, nor an economic solution, but a spiritual response linked to donations that might stay the ravages of unbearable suffering for one more moment, one more day.

A majority of images of third world people in television ads are children. This fits nicely with allusions to future transcendence. But the corporate imagery differs from the gaunt representations that one sees in ads for charities seeking to stave off malnutrition, disease and death among starving and mutilated children. Whereas portraits of new global elites include children as subjects (love objects) who motivate the new elite, portraits of the poor visually and

narratively focus on children's faces while marginalizing adults to support functions as teachers or nurses.

Corporate Narratives of Poverty

The few corporate brands that address poverty also rely heavily on images of children and the elderly - for these are the categories of the deserving poor. The American Express 'Charge against Hunger' campaign ran during the Christmas shopping season for several years. The children in this campaign are smiling and happy thanks to American Express. This is a seasonal fix to the problem of hunger. Though this program was aimed at the United States the background music has an African tint. It is upbeat and communal, inviting the privatized viewer to become part of a wider human community. Ironically, entrance into this community was accomplished by going to the local mall and accruing credit card debt. When corporations venture into the imagery of poverty, signifiers of possibility and promise replace the signifiers of hopelessness. Sullen faces turn to smiles; inactivity becomes play; slums are replaced by communities. Numbers appear on the screen to offer empirical confirmation that the American Express campaign works. In a class-based society, the American Express campaign reasons that hunger can be reduced if the more affluent simply buy more commodities. Consumers don't have to give up disposable income in the form of taxes to support social programs. It's a win/win situation. Moreover, there is no sense that American Express is simply donating a small portion of its profits drawn from high interest rates attached to commodity desire and subsequent overconsumption.[6] We don't see any statistics on corporate profits or on the cost of this public relations campaign. Unfortunately, the State and its programs ('welfare') don't advertise this way. Imagine shots of a happy family cashing in their food stamps.

In a series of images linking childhood with future potential, Cargill takes the poverty out of being poor under the banner of universal humanism. Cargill succinctly iterates a variant on the rights of man - here are the rights of children. Every child is born, not so much equal as special. Here then is a noble vision - nourish "every [hungry] child on this planet" and imagine what accomplishments will be made by individuals contributing to the greater good. Here is a curious vision of the capitalist system, the inverse of capitalist rationalization - the goal of commodification is only a means to a greater end - feeding the children of the world and watching billions of flowers grow.

> Female voiceover: "Every person on this planet, no matter how big or small - is filled with potential. Every mind, whether it exists in wealth or poverty has the ability to think great thoughts. Every idea, no matter who it comes from is full of possibilities. Cargill believes this potential must be nourished because the better we are fed the more we hunger to achieve.:

The scene keyed to the word "poverty" shows a child next to what appears to be an abandoned British factory. Yet, the aesthetic devices (decontextualization, choral music, portraiture associated with grandeur) of the ad in conjunction with the uplifting narration dissolves the hardship of poverty by equating it with formally equal scenes of children from around the planet. Though categories of social class, nationality, gender, and ethnicity are visually evoked, they are leveled by the overarching categories of "every person" and "every mind." Cargill celebrates universal humanism by situating every child as a singular subject on its own scape of global cultural geography. Cargill presents itself as a corporation committed to feeding the children of the world while the imagery connotes a healthy world in which progress and achievement are ongoing endeavors.

Like the Cargill ad, a Biotechnology industry ad aired in 2001, sponsored by the Council for Biotechnology Information, sutures together a smooth montage of scenes of that alternate between the poor with the privileged, between global North and South set against a soundtrack of airy and optimistic music. The ad opens with a biotechnology researcher explaining how "golden rice" containing beta-carotene "can prevent blindness in millions of the world's children." While biotechnology offers the first world cures for cancer, it is in agriculture that "biotechnology is providing solutions that are improving lives today and could improve our world tomorrow."

For the moment, we want to dwell on the concluding image of the montage -- a Vietnamese woman holding her child, stands posed for the camera in a farm field -- behind her are other peasants/field workers. She steps forward, while behind her the other faces remain hidden under the broad-brimmed hats they wear. They are all gently stooped over at their labor. But this remains abstract labor -- it is the pose of labor rather than the labor itself. This depiction plays on our longstanding stereotypes of Asian peasants bent over in rice fields. Stoop labor meets glamour photography. Indeed, the photographic codes seem to cancel out connotations of either coerced labor or the grinding poverty associated with this kind of field labor.

The same ideal-typical representation of third world peasantry appears in a scene from Boeing's 2001 ad campaign. Is this the poster-girl of the world poor and their future transcendence within a world of capitalist

technologies? Why do capitalist corporations that have pinned their futures to the growth of 'high technology' choose this image of field laborers to depict their corporate presence in the world? The woman appears to possess a quiet dignity, and may even be seen as exuding a confidence that the future belongs to herself and her child. Her position in the montage follows immediately after scenes of a young middle class, white American girl who has survived cancer and is once again happily playing softball. Poverty is no more visible in the Asian agricultural fields than in the middle class suburb. And neither seems unhealthy. The female voiceover frames the meaning of the suburban scene as an illustration of how biotechnology research has produced discoveries "that are improving lives today." As the camera transitions to the frame of the Asian mother and daughter portrait, the voiceover continues "and could improve our world, tomorrow." One wonders however if that brighter tomorrow will be a function of changing conditions of labor, or if the biotechnology industry alone can abolish the consequences of poverty, disease and malnourishment?

Dominated by images of women and children the poor are represented as passive agents to be acted upon rather than as actors themselves. They have no voice. They are spoken for. And when corporate capital acts upon the poor, it is to the benefit of everyone. It produces golden rice, media classrooms, better agricultural products, new markets, healthier bodies and sharper minds. No form of resistance is visible, because like everywhere else in these landscapes, power and authority have been put to rest.

How do images of third world people fit into any conception of capitalist relations of production? For the most part, we have seen that the poor are represented as an accident -an act of god, or misfortune, or corrupt leadership. Though it hardly seems possible in an era defined by globalization, third world peoples appear even less involved in systems of production than do those in the first world in the representations of corporate advertising. We have seen that political-economic forces are never shown in relation to social problems such as lack of basic needs -- food, shelter, and medical care - but they are also repressed in relation to production. The reasons are obvious - there would be steep legitimation costs to pay if sweatshops, child labor, migrant field labor, shanty towns, barrios and slums appeared in proportion to their frequency in the system of commodity chains that shape global capitalism.

There are momentary exceptions. We have elsewhere discussed the FedEx representation of global just-in-time manufacturing in which disciplined squads of South Asian workers show up at otherwise quiet factory sites when they are needed to fill a European order. Fleeting images of third world youth, minus poverty, appear in montages for tech giants like Cisco, SAP, GE, IBM, and Microsoft. Such ads see third world youth not simply as future consumers but as part of a future global labor force that has been trained and educated. In recent years, oil companies such as the combined ChevronTexaco have quietly acknowledged that their previous approaches to energy extraction may have mismanaged the environment and exploited third world peoples. But that has all changed, because now, "Working together, we're developing energy faster. Developing people faster. And accelerating prosperity for all of us. ChevronTexaco. Turning partnership into energy." Like the Biotechnology and Boeing ads, Otherness here is accorded a poised dignity -- in fact these ads narrate the visual transcendence of poverty in the developing world, thanks to technology, investment and "partnership."

Posting the Contradictions

Our survey of how corporate advertising represents the social relations of production circa the millennium has unavoidably passed over various relevant aspects of these representations. One significant omission concerns representations of retirement. So many ads speak to the social relations of retirement that a full discussion will require more space than we can allot here. And we would have liked to address what might be called the "human capital" ads that appear for governmental units such as Michigan, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Korea, Ontario and others as they vie to recruit investment capital to their regions.

As we strain to summarize the representational patterns in 2,065 TV ads available to us for this study, we cannot avoid the self-contradictory character of this discourse. The very same ads that seek to deny the conditions of class also fantasize about the pleasures of privilege; the same ads that paint a utopian moment of retirement unconstrained by either scarcity or the performance principle also acknowledge that capitalist work relations are essentially a constraint on human potentialities; the same ads that betoken freedom and flexibility in new wireless electronic technologies also treat it as a necessary leash.

Taken collectively these ads make it difficult to conceive of social relations outside of the market mechanism.

And yet, conflictual market relations disappear from view. Generalized markets seem to float in the ether, without need for laws or authorities to enforce rules. In fact, one can scarcely imagine any market in the world that is as purely self-regulating as the electronic markets represented in these ads. While the ads glory in the supremacy of open markets, they are not so forthcoming about the nature of capitalism. Capitalism mostly lingers in the shadows, an absent presence that shapes everything, but miraculously leaves no imprint of its grip.

Corporations utilize advertising discourses to legitimize their practices by naturalizing and universalizing the social relations produced by capitalist economic formations, without actually dwelling on either the capitalist part or the unequal relations. These discourses about markets and technologies coupled with an absence of national boundaries or state institutions, leave the impression that in an ostensibly post-Fordist network economy, corporations provide the conceptual infrastructure that holds together, and gives order to, the networks of production, distribution, consumption and reproduction that constitute civil society.

It will surprise no one that consumptive possibilities rather than production relations are the primary focus of advertising. The material production of commodities in factories, in workshops or on assembly lines is mostly absent. When manufacturing scenes do appear, computer-directed technologies seem to autonomously churn out finished goods on their own. We can confirm that compared with twenty years ago, there has been a decisive shift from scenes of farmers, manual labor, blue collar labor and even generic white collar labor, in favor of scenes of people clustered in small work groups working at computer monitors, in open architecture environments, and without the presence of external authority. Commodities mostly appear in transit, highlighting the importance of commodity chains and the transportation, communications and distribution networks speeding packages and packets this way and that across the universe. Labor generally shows up only in its finished product, such that living labor has no cultural power other than the romance of the individual faces isolated on screen, or in the magic of the branded totems that now carry the fetish traces of the ghosts of labor.

Adopting the landscape metaphor for our project has compelled us to reconsider whether or not these representations reflect changes 'out there' in some political economic reality? Do they disguise, distort or falsify fundamental changes in the relations of production? Does Louis Althusser's (1971:155) formulation concerning the relationship between ideology and the media apparatus still hold? "What is represented in ideology is...not the system of real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of these individuals to the real relations in which they live." Traditionally, Marxian theory has thought of ideology as distorting some real set of relations in such a way that it conceals what is really going on. For Marx, the critique of ideology was at the same time a critique of exploitation embedded in the actual practices of "equivalence exchange." Althusser's formulation restates this critique. But the representations that we have studied wander back and forth between referencing something akin to the real, and constructing imaginary landscapes, not simply imaginary subject relations. Our current research emphatically affirms Baudrillard's thesis, as restated by Smith (2001:3), that "…in the topos of simulacra, any distinction between the represented image and reality vanishes as the historical contexts in which images were reproduced are effaced by their (re)production and circulation." But the conclusion that is drawn from this, that "finally all determinate processes are overthrown and recuperated by the indeterminacy of the late-capitalist code," is much dicier, an ahistorical argument that cannot be empirically verified. Further, it may be – at least in the sphere of capitalist advertising – that the "code" is not quite so unified, but is itself characterized by unevenness and contradiction.

Do the advertising landscapes we have examined constitute a simulacrum of an epoch in which such representations radically eclipse the principle of referentiality? As many times as we have pored through these several thousand advertising texts, we are unable to cleanly disentangle what Jean Baudrillard delineates as the "successive phases of the image" in the present representational moment. Baudrillard's "successive phases of the image," from representation to its negation in simulation are as follows:

> 1) It is the reflection of a basic reality.
> 2) It masks and perverts a basic reality.
> 3) It masks the absence of a basic reality.
> 4) It bears no relation to any reality whatever: it is its own pure simulacrum. (Baudrillard 1994: 11).

Our examination of corporate advertising texts suggests that these "successive phases of the image" are not historically mutually exclusive. Elements of each phase of the image can be found mashed together in the current historical moment – sometimes within the same advertising text. Baudrillard's phases of the images are less historical stages than ideal types that help us think through the relationship between modes of representation and modes

of production. Just as there has never been a moment in which the representation has been based on an exact equivalence of "the sign and the real," conversely there is no "pure simulacrum." Rather, a dialectical history of representation can be found recapitulated and negated in the present historical moment.

Whereas consumer-goods ads have become enmeshed in a metacommunicative winking about artifice that prompts some degree of reflexivity about what constitutes the "real" in ad-land, corporate ads adopt a range of metacommunication strategies that are more serious in tone. Hence, whereas consumer ads can be read as locating the "real" neither in the text itself, nor in some external reality, but in the matrix of desire that constitutes the individual subject, corporate ads still seek to locate the "real" in an external reality, albeit a referential world that has been effectively occluded by the over-mediated codes that now stand between us and the more and more fuzzy referents of science, markets, and the social relations of production. Once again we are reminded that there may be a reason for the recurring use of fuzzy, blurry signification strategies – they refer to a world out there that we mostly "know" of via the media frames themselves. As such the "real" world is thus more and more distant from our capacity to conceptually map it with precision (see Goldman, Papson, & Kersey 2004).

This leaves us to rethink the relationship between political economy and ideology as it is refracted through an apparatus of the simulacrum. It is not that political economy is dead, but rather that there may no longer be a decisive correspondence between historically situated modes of production and modes of representation. Though there are good reasons for locating a transition to the "postmodern" moment in the mechanical reproduction of images, it may be that the either/or of modernism versus postmodernism has exhausted its utility as a trope. In this study we have repeatedly paused to reflect on the apparently postmodern character of the signification processes, while the product of these processes bears a ghostly, albeit emaciated, resemblance to the grand narratives that are often associated with the bourgeoisie's account of modernity.

Endnotes

1. The exception to this was the UPS campaign of 2002-2003 that focused separate ads on the office manager, the logistics manager, the shipping manager, the CFO, and the CEO.

2. It should be noted that Morgan Stanley had been accused of employment discrimination by Allison Schieffelin (who had been employed by Morgan Stanley from 1986 to 2000). The case was filed with the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission in 1998 and in 2001, the EEOC "determined that there is reasonable cause to believe that [Morgan Stanley] discriminated against [Ms. Schieffelin] and a class of similarly situated females..." The EEOC filed an additional complaint against Morgan Stanley in Federal Court, alleging "unlawful employment practices" against these women officers and retaliation in the work place against the plaintiff. The EEOC filing alleged that "Morgan Stanley systematically denied opportunities for equal compensation and advancement to a class of professional women." Just prior to trial in 2004, Morgan Stanley settled the sex discrimination lawsuit for $54 million with the usual language that they were not admitting to the allegations. (See http://www.forbes.com/2002/10/24/cx_aw_1024fine.html and http://www.forbes.com/work/careers/2004/07/07/cx_da_0707topnews.html)

3. In keeping with the transnational structure of corporate capitalism, information technology investments have accelerated worldwide, though these investments remained disproportionately greater in the United States, which in 1995 accounted for some 40 percent of global information technology consumption (Daniel Schiller 1999: 16).

4. "Help Wanted: The IT Workforce Gap at the Dawn of a New Century," Information Technology Association of America, 1997: 9.

5. All ads that promote the panoptic potential of new technologies structure their narratives around humor.

6. The small print that appears at the end of the ad, reads: "American Express will donate up to $5,000,000 to Share Our Strength based on three cents per Card purchase. Donations are not tax-deductible by Cardmembers."

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The Disasters of War

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Against the Common Good [1]

The United States is at war again, as it has been for much of its history. Today, it is waging a war on terror and expanding its military installations on an unprecedented global scale, waging a war on crime and creating the largest carceral complex in the world, and waging a war on Iraq. Although the latter is now officially over and won (the U.S. occupation of Iraq being, from the state's point of view, an exercise in democratization, so-called). [2] In the course of the prosecution of the war on terror and the war on Iraq, photographs have attracted unusual public attention and controversy. Newspapers openly report that military regulations forbid taking or distributing images of returning dead U.S. soldiers, a preemptive patriotic control measure that, in the main, has backfired badly. [3] Independent news agencies question the reliability of embedded print and television photo/video, confirming the staging of fake war victories, such as the "spontaneous" toppling of the statue of Sadaam Hussein in central Baghdad, and the erasure of actual war carnage, such as in the destruction of Fallujah. And, most noteworthy, the public distribution of the amateur photographs of torture and abuse at Abu Ghraib prison now defines the moral corruption of the war and the subsequent occupation. [4] The latter have received considerable attention, exemplified in Susan Sontag's (2004) last published essay which angrily denounced the photographs, their having been taken at all, and the Bush administration that authorized them and then treated their exposure as nothing more than a public relations disaster.

The question of war and photography thus looms large today. Without pretending to do justice to the subject, but to provide a brief remark, I turn not to Sontag's essay on Abu Ghraib, but to her last book, Regarding the Pain of Others (2003). Sontag returns to the subject of photography, earlier considered in the celebrated On Photography (1977), and in this book focuses on the role that photographs play in war. Decisively influenced by her wartime visits to Sarajevo, Regarding the Pain of Others is more directly concerned with the political function of war photographs or what she calls "shock" or "atrocity" photographs. Do images of war's atrocity inhibit or encourage war or numb reaction altogether, she asks? What are the social and political results of viewing pictures of the disasters of war?

Bury Them and Keep Quiet

Her answer, in short: "Harrowing photographs do not inevitably lose their power to shock. But they are not much help if the task is to understand. Narratives can make us understand. Photographs do something else: they haunt us" (Sontag 2003:89). Sontag promotes understanding or what she later names "thinking" and "being serious" and, when you're reading, the precise authoritative tone of "There's nothing wrong with standing back and thinking" is unmistakably familiar (2003:118). Thinking is preferred to remembering, an "ethical act" of which there is nevertheless too much; too much injustice to remember and too much remembering of all of it (Sontag 2003:115). Thinking is also contrasted to photography itself, the medium through which we now "more and more" remember and whose modus operandi is haunting. While "there now exists a vast repository of…atrocious images [that] haunt us" and that "perform" the "vital function" of telling us "what human beings are capable of doing," (ibid) these photographs and their haunting effect seem to block, rather than enable understanding or serious thought. Sontag's emphasis on "standing back and thinking" is an important means by which she calls the viewer to accountability and to politics, however, there's something profoundly amiss in her presumptive segregation of haunting and understanding.

I'll return to what's amiss, but note that there is a larger question Sontag avoids altogether: what does or should a picture of war or poverty or exploitation or displacement or dispossession or illegality look like? She takes for granted—it is a common assumption—that the paradigmatic horror of war looks like a dead or broken body. Death and mutilation are part of war's barbarity and also powerful icons of it. But what if we consider the causes of war and militarism more generally? What is the picture of a society that spends, like the United States does, close to $800 billion dollars a year on military, police, prisons, and so-called national security? How do we envision the social systems that produce pain, injury, exhaustion, aggravation, loss of life, social and civil death? While we can see these effects on a person's body, how do we show their effects on the mind, the spirit, or the culture? How would we make a picture of what we have lost that we don't even know we've lost? What is the picture of a society that doesn't know it has lost its own capacity for self-definition and self-creation?

Rabble

Haunting makes a more telling appearance elsewhere in Regarding the Pain of Others. In the course of surveying the formidable archive of anti-war art and photography (she has just been describing Ernst Friedrich's radical antimilitarist album Krieg dem Kriege! (War Against War! 1924)) that by now, she insists, withdraws any rights to "innocence" or "ignorance," Sontag portrays a scene in Abel Gance's extraordinary anti-war film J'Accuse (1938).

> 'Morts de Verdun, levez-vous!' (Rise, Dead of Verdun!), cries the deranged veteran who is the protagonist of the film, and he repeats his summons in German and in English: 'Your sacrifices were in vain!' And the vast mortuary plain disgorges its multitudes, an army of shambling ghosts in rotted uniforms with mutilated faces, who rise from their graves and set out in all directions, causing mass panic among the populace already mobilized for a new pan-European war. 'Fill your eyes with

> this horror!' It is the only thing that can stop you!' the madman cries to the fleeing multitudes of the living, who reward him with a martyr's death, after which he joins his dead comrades: a sea of impassive ghosts overrunning the cowering future combatants and victims of la guerre de demain. War beaten back by apocalypse (2003:16-17).

Sontag focuses on the film's most celebrated scene and an unforgettable image: dead soldiers rising from the then new mass cemeteries covered with white crosses. [5] But almost everything about Sontag's rendering of scene and film misses Gance's message and the film's lessons about haunting. A remake of his 1918 version, J'accuse opens with some of the earlier film's documentary footage of relentless urban bombing—-reminiscent of Baghdad today—and the notorious WWI trenches. The noise is a deafening accompaniment to the carnage as we are introduced to the protagonist, Jean Diaz. Hardly a "deranged" veteran, he is the sole survivor of his World War I patrol, a gentle group of often handholding politicized and self-aware working class men who foresee their own deaths at Verdun. Believed dead, Diaz is only discovered barely alive during the tearful roll call of the dead when he is literally raised from the ground. Returning home after the armistice, Diaz becomes committed to preventing any future wars, and as "veteran," "researcher", "poet," and "utopian" (his self-designations), he creates an invention designed to prevent war. This invention is stolen by a deceiving industrialist/politician, a representative member of the distant ruling elite who, the film reminds us, sent 12 million men to unjustifiable slaughter and who uses it to foment war not peace. The corruption of his aims and his sense of complicity coincide with Diaz's growing perception that another war is imminent. It is only at this point and after his J'accuse speech falls on the deaf ears of the middle managers and white collars like himself to whom it is directed that Diaz is deemed mad. But, as he himself says, "I can't explain it. I'm not crazy. My house is full of fear." But there is something amiss with him. He is haunted by war past, present and future. He is haunted by how quickly the dead have been forgotten, by the lies of propaganda ("les belles phrases"), and by how quickly new "divisions among men" have been organized. It is only after his raised voice fails to raise the consciousness of the living to the concrete pains and losses of war's imperialist and industrialist abstractions that he tries to raise the dead; it is only after he tries to raise the dead that he is considered deranged.

And raise the dead he does. Sontag is correct to say that Diaz summons the war dead in French, German, and English, but what's notable is the internationalism—the war dead from "all countries" are called and arise in solidarity. And when they arise, despite some initial panic, we see not the force or the face of horror, but spectral men, some sad, some with mutilated faces and limbs, moving together, holding each other up when unable to walk unassisted. This is far from an apocalypse. The ghosts of Verdun do not terrorize the living. Rather, as the village residents note, they are making their way home across a Europe, not haunted by the dead, but by the specter of war itself.

This haunting is also clearly an active social movement, not a "cowering future." In these scenes, everybody (and magically everything else—trees, roads, houses) is on the move! Jean Diaz neither dies nor becomes martyr; the last we see him he's still conjuring the dead, helping to create an uprising of people who form a multitude that refuses war. In fact, this grand scene is not, pace Sontag, how the film concludes. Jean Diaz raises a pacifist army of soldier ghosts and they win their cause. J'accuse ends under the banner of "universal peace" at a "convocation" of nations that looks much like a rousing meeting of the U.N. General Assembly were its members World Social Forum participants rather than heads of state. At this assembly, full of African and Asian faces, immediate "disarmament" is established and war is "abolished." To great cheers, war is proclaimed "dead" ("La guerre est morte!") and the "world renewed." The final shot shows a mingling of ordinary people, the living and the ghostly almost indistinguishable, on their way to a more just and equitable home.

What More Can One Do?

The refusal of war, the non-necessity of war, is the lesson Gance's ghosts help the living to realize, but it is not the lesson that Sontag extracts, either from J'accuse or from Virginia Woolf, whose reflections on the origins and nature of war, Three Guineas, also appeared in 1938. Regarding the Pain of Others begins with Woolf's proposal to the man who has written to her to ask "how in your opinion are we to prevent war?" that they should look together at some pictures. The pictures are disturbing photographs of mutilated or dead women and children and bombed-out houses sent by the Spanish government "about twice a week" in the winter of 1936-37. Woolf asks "whether when we look at the same photographs we feel the same things" (1938:10). Her reply: "When we look at those photographs…however different the education, the traditions behind us, our sensations are the same…You, Sir, call them 'horror and disgust'. We also call them horror and disgust…War, you say, is an abomination; a barbarity; war must be stopped at whatever cost. And we echo your words. War is an abomination; a barbarity; war must be stopped" (1938:11).

Sontag is fixated on exposing Woolf's mistake in treating the photographs as ethically transparent, obvious justification for the elimination of war. As Woolf herself writes, "Those photographs are not an argument; they are simply a crude statement of fact" ((1938:11). Sontag's reasoning consists of two now-commonplace observations of our own era. First, photographs do not show war as it is, but war as it is seen by the photographer and the viewer of the photographs. As Sontag concisely puts it, "Photographs of the victims of war are themselves a species of rhetoric" (2003:6), institutionally produced, one should add. Her second and accentuated argument is equally emblematic: there is no "we" of good-willed and like-minded people that can be presumed to react in the same way. As she writes: "It is this 'we' that Woolf challenges at the start of her book: she refuses to allow her interlocutor to take a 'we' for granted. But into this 'we,' after the pages devoted to the feminist point, she then subsides. No 'we' should be taken for granted when the subject is looking at other people's pain" (2003:7). [6] Both of these points are, analytically speaking, true enough, even if their specific impacts depend on whether you treat them as crippling prohibitions or friendly facts. [7] There is, however, a "we" that Sontag takes for granted and it is the one that helps us grasp why she rejects Abel Gance's veteran ghosts and Woolf's haunting photographs.

Vain Laments

Sontag's understanding of war and her larger regard for the pain of others rests on a denial of the potential power of haunting to stop war. The denial is not premised on her brief for measured rational thought as a more effective method of social understanding and grounds for political contest than traumatic horror occasioned by visceral imagery. Neither her pointed criticisms of naïve and manufactured sentiments and sympathies nor her recuperation of reality from the jaws of spectacle require or warrant a dismissal of haunting as by definition inadequate to critical thinking or comprehension.

Her denial is axiomatic and appears in a dictate made while commenting on Woolf. "Who believes today that

war can be abolished? No one, not even pacifists. We hope only (so far in vain) to stop genocide…to bring to justice those who commit gross violations of the laws of war… and to be able to stop specific wars by imposing negotiated alternatives to armed conflict" (2003:5). This is the most significant and revealing statement in the entire book. This "we," this "No one believes war can be abolished today" who hopes in vain, is the sanctioned semi-secret we that directs all the questions and answers and that controls the book's final lamentable conclusion in which the absence of haunting yields a profound incapacity to understand. This "we" is tormented by the human cost of war, including wars it considers just. This "we" is afraid of war and of the armies of the dead war creates. But this "we" assumes that war is inevitable, that war can and will continue, that being "haunted" by photographs of war's destruction is a naïve evasion of this self-evident grown-up fact. Sontag dismisses Woolf's unity of "people of good will" as antiquated, but at the cost of invoking an equally ancient but far more abusive collectivity masquerading as a universal "we." No one today believes that war can be abolished.

The Way is Hard

Sontag implies that being haunted is like being in a state of unreflective paralytic shock or disgust, the two rather limited affective states she associates with haunting. But it would be wrong to reduce haunting to shock or disgust, although these may be present. In fact, haunting can foster comprehension and action.

Haunting, at least as I conceive it, is an animated state of existence and perception in which a repressed or unresolved social violence makes itself known to you, sometimes very directly, sometimes more obliquely (Gordon 1997). Haunting is a vivid, sensual or embodied way of being made aware that what's been contained or repressed or blocked is very much alive and present, messing with our various ways of keeping the troublesome and the disturbing at bay. Haunting describes those singular and yet repetitive experiences when home becomes unfamiliar, when the over-and-done-with comes alive, when what's been in your blind-field comes into view. Haunting raises specters, and it jams time—the way we separate the past, the present, and the future. Ghosts arise when repression fails and thus they are not silent, dead, or invisible, but animated with the return or the uprising of what's been repressed. The modus operandi of haunting, why it unsettles and defies detached reasoning, is the recognition that a ghost is present, demanding its due, demanding attention. In demanding your attention and often in frightening you, haunting invariably incites a something-to-be-done. What is to be done and to what end, of course, is never given in advance; every haunting ends or persists along the path, worked on and over by human effort and history, by which its conditions of possibility are broken or renewed. The power of haunting is, in this sense, at least two-sided. It is only ever partially measured by the magnitude of the impact of the harm or the loss or the injustice it registers. The power of haunting must always be equally measured by the brave will and the counter force mobilized against its perpetuation.

A Collection of Dead Men

Regarding the Pain of Others concludes with Sontag's "revised version of the end of Gance's J'accuse", her last answer to the question of whether one can "be mobilized actively to oppose war by an image (or a group of images)" (2003:124,122). For her ending image, she chooses Jeff Wall's "Dead Troops Talk (A Vision After an Ambush of a Red Army Patrol near Moqor, Aghanistan, Winter 1986)."

> Engulfed by the image, which is so accusatory, one could fantasize that the soldiers might turn and talk to us. But no, no one is looking out of the picture. There's no threat of protest. They are not about to yell at us to bring a halt to the abomination which is war. They haven't come back to life in order to stagger off to denounce the war-makers who sent them to kill and be killed...These dead are supremely uninterested in the living: in those who took their lives; in witnesses—and in us. Why should they seek our gaze? What would they have to say to us? 'We'—this 'we' is everyone who has never experienced anything like what they went through—don't understand. We don't get it. We truly can't imagine what it was like. We can't imagine how dreadful, how terrifying war is; and how normal it becomes. Can't understand, can't imagine (Sontag 2003:125-6).

Sontag replaces Gance's pacifist army of ghosts with a simulated picture of dead men talking aimlessly. Sontag replaces Gance's actual ending—where, war having been abolished, the dead and the living drift into their "renewed world" together—with an unbreachable experiential gulf between the soldier who fights and the civilian who watches. This experiential divide is a sign or a symptom of immobilization, not haunting. One characteristic feature of haunting is precisely the shifting, even the dislocation of experiential divides: for haunting is about being touched, often painfully, by what seemed over, distant, unknown, invisible, irrelevant, impersonal but which is now alive, close, visible, urgent, personal. Obviously, being haunted by war combat if you never were in it is not the same as having been in it. But, in making this gulf permanent and absolute, Sontag replicates the fatalism of war itself. There's no threat of protest because we don't understand, can't understand, can't imagine. Here we see poignantly that when haunting itself has been refused or repressed rather than acknowledged and worked through, there is only the failure of comprehension and imagination, a no-man's-land of a war-torn self-other binary. Don't understand. Don't get it. Can't understand, can't imagine. And a certain loneliness too, it seems to me, for Sontag's "we," bereft of the abolitionist imaginary and its traditions, waits tragically with the silent for what can never arrive: for the dead to speak to you and to exonerate you without your ever speaking to them.

What Courage!

But history is full of a different "we"—war resisters and deserters of all ages and occupations, peaceful and unpatriotic veterans, clown armies, rebellious women—and this "we" has characteristically, like Gance, been less afraid of ghosts, and unwilling to wait in silence. This "we" makes social movement, even if disorganized and outflanked. [8] We, who believe that abolishing war is necessary and possible, whose standpoint is motivated by that

belief, are not haunted by a horror that is inevitable, an incomprehensible state of perpetual war. We are haunted by the ways war and militarism organize destruction, disregard and death as the means of economic, political and social life. We are haunted by a horror that is unnecessary, that could have been prevented, that can still be prevented, if we have the will to act. Whatever the limits of our comprehension of war, we understand its fundamental nonnecessity and can imagine the better kind of life we could have without it. Whatever the limits of our comprehension, like all abolitionists, we carry on regardless. A haunting is a summons to an action without precedent, an action that has failed in the past, or, an action that has failed to be attempted, an action that is now, frighteningly, exhilaratingly, entirely up to us.

Endnotes

1. My title and subheadings are from Goya's The Disasters of War (1967). A shorter version of this essay appeared in Cameraworks: A Journal of Photographic Arts Vol. 33, No. 1 Spring/Summer 2006.

2. The March National Security Strategy of the United States begins: "America is at war." The next target of the permanent security war with which the United States is now engaged is Iran, identified in the report as the country who poses the greatest threat to the United States (2006:20).

3. See Milbank (2003) and www.thememoryhole.org, which has posted for viewing and downloading some of the photographs they eventually received (after several appeals) from the Air Force in response to their Freedom of Information Act request.

4. I say amateur because what's not been released are the tapes from the surveillance cameras (CCTV) ubiquitous in all prisons. As Shafiq Rasul and Asif Iqbal note, "We should point out that there were—and no doubt still are—cameras everywhere in the interrogation areas. We are aware that evidence that could contradict what is being said officially is in existence. We know that CCTV cameras, videotapes, and photographs exist since we were regularly filmed and photographed during interrogations and at other times, as well" (Meeropol 2005:28). No doubt, these are one source for Secretary Rumsfield's warning that should all the unreleased photographs be made public, "it's going to make matters worse" and for the Defense Department's continued refusal to release "secret" photographs and videotapes following a federal judge's order. See www.cnn.com and Zernike (2005).

5. It is also, contra Sontag, a powerful story, one taken up equally effectively by J.R.R. Tolkien in The Lord of the Rings where the participation of the dishonored Army of the Dead—all deserters from a former war—is necessary to win the famous battle on the Fields of Pellenor outside the city of Gondor, which concludes the War of the Rings and ushers in a long peace. Tolkien was likely to have seen J'accuse; in any event, he himself fought on the front lines at the Battle of the Somme, which took place after Verdun, returning to England with trench fever, severe post-war trauma, and a life-long opposition to war, militarism and military industrialism. See Garth (2003).

6. Sontag's interpretation of Woolf, which reduces a sophisticated and original argument to "the feminist point," is not terribly persuasive on its own terms. For in fact the whole of Three Guineas is devoted to showing that despite the fact that the letter writer claims to share with Woolf the goal of preventing war, their analyses of the causes and nature of war itself are so divergent that his prescriptions for prevention are rejected at the start. The scene where Woolf looks at the photographs occurs in the first few pages and is the context for her shifting

his terms altogether: "Let us then give up, for the moment, the effort to answer your question, how we can help you to prevent war, by discussing the political, the patriotic or the psychological reasons which lead you to go to war" (1983:11). Three Guineas is important for, among other reasons, demonstrating that peace is more than the absence of war narrowly defined, a framework Sontag studiously dismisses.

7. See, for instance, Rebecca Solnit's (2004) book, a wonderful meditation on how to do activist politics and sophisticated thinking at the same time and thrive! Coincidentally, she evokes World War I and Virginia Woolf in her first sentences: "On January 18, 1915, six months into the First World War, as all Europe was convulsed by killing and dying, Virginia Woolf wrote in her journals, 'The future is dark, which is on the whole, the best thing the future can be, I think.' Dark, she seems to be saying, as in inscrutable, not as in terrible. We often mistake the one for the other."

8. On war resistance and the abolitionist imaginary, see Gordon (2004), especially the preface, chapters 3 and 25.

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Socrates in Earpods? The iPodification of Education

Tara Brabazon

My dreams are filled with thoughts of revenge. In a rescripting of Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure, I have dreams of Socrates—pronounced So-crates for the purposes of the film—returning once more. This time, he is not visiting a proto-Pretty in Pink high school of John Hughes's imagination. Instead, the stroppy old philosopher visits our marketized, corporatized, branded, spruiked and spun 'universities.' He wanders around the car parks, kebab stands, automatic teller machines and computer terminals. But instead of asking the profound questions about the nature of truth, beauty and self, So-crates marches up to the plush offices of the chancellery building and demands to see the Vice Chancellor. Upon entry into the suite with panoramic views, So-crates grabs the V.C. by the throat and with a Steve Irwin guttural Oz-tray-lee-an accent, splutters a far more direct and disturbing question than from his days in Athens: "what the bloody hell is going on here?"

Clearly, I have a rich and varied fantasy life. If I did not, then the concrete, copyright and conflicts in universities would get me down. But we do need a Socrates to ask the difficult questions that no longer have space or support to demand an answer. This article for Fast Capitalism has a goal: to probe the role and function of digitized sound in teaching and learning. The policies, agendas and assumptions about i-lectures and the ipodification of teaching spaces need to be assessed.

There is a direct trigger for my concern, and not surprisingly it involves advertising campaigns for universities. Before Christmas 2005, Murdoch University in Perth inserted a large, glossy pamphlet into the national newspaper, The Australian. On the same page that featured a story on "Australia's top teaching rankings," was a crashing headline: "mp3 technology: a new wave in learning."

> At some high schools, MP3 players are taboo. Next year at Murdoch they will be encouraged—it is all part of an ever-widening variety of study options for students. The ubiquitous MP3 will at last give students total flexibility for when and where they listen to the lectures they are unable to attend—students will simply download lectures to their Ipod and listen at their leisure, anywhere!
>
> The increased flexibility builds on 'ilecture' a hugely successful innovation introduced last year, which broadcasts lectures over the Internet. The new MP3 technology demonstrates a new leap in flexible learning, as students will no longer have to be anchored to a computer. ("MP3 technology":4)

This brochure was then retexted on a promotional website that once more affirmed the ipod, with quotations from the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic). Professor Jan Thomas is described as "a former student of Murdoch's Veterinary School who went on to teach at the University. Ten years ago she realized university teaching practices needed to be updated." (http://www.ccpr.murdoch.edu.au/opportunity/mp3.html) The rationale for these 'improvements' was not determined by changes to pedagogy, literacy theory, international trends in curriculum development, library studies or information management. Instead, she states,

> more and more of our students are juggling their studies with jobs and family commitments, which make attendance at all lectures increasingly difficult. (http://www.ccpr.murdoch.edu.au/opportunity/mp3.html)

University students have always worked, and students have always upheld family commitments, unless they were raised by wolves. The Pro-Vice Chancellor is not only riding the ideological surf that rolls progress, pedagogy and technology into a tidal wave of educational change, but is justifying—or excusing—nonattendance at lectures. For the academic leader of a university to offer this rationalization is remarkable. While she does still value "contact between staff and students," she also concedes—even in her own advertisement—that "we will continue to provide face-to-face contact with lecturers for most of our courses." (emphasis added http://www.ccpr.murdoch.edu.au/ opportunity/mp3.html) At the same time that the Pro Vice Chancellor was making these statements, other universities around the world, including Oxford, are requiring students to sign contracts committing to lecture and tutorial attendance. In February 2006, The West Australian newspaper reported that a range of universities have policies to ensure students fulfill their responsibilities within a teaching program. At the conclusion of the article, the journalist reported that "Murdoch and the University of WA do not require students to sign attendance contracts and have no plans to start" (Rasdien 2006:58). Both these institutions have based their academic and intellectual futures on flexible learning, i-lectures and ipods. Confirming—and perhaps enforcing—attendance on campus works against their present strategies.

These wild West(ern Australian) Universities are not alone in masking the 'change management' of academics, teaching and technology with discussion of flexibility and choice. For example, Vice Chancellor Diana Green of Sheffield Hallam University revealed the impact of education's ipodification.

> More and more students either work for cash or do volunteer work in the community and, compared with 20 years ago, students are forced to manage their time better. Students also have much less structured time, with more learning done via the internet. I think there is more pressure on them because they are still expected to do just as well, even though they are learning many of the subjects by themselves. (Green in Borland 2005:5)

When I read her statement—and kept returning to her words assuming I had missed a phrase—I realized it was time to unpick the assumptions of flexible learning, particularly for the most junior of our undergraduates. That a Vice Chancellor would doom a generation of students to learn 'by themselves' in full conscience and awareness, justifying this pedagogy by the affirmation that "learning [is] done via the internet," confirms why this article for Fast Capitalism was written. Every technological application, hardware invention or software innovation has its marketers and public relations consultants employed to sell its value. Indeed, these cited statements were derived from academic managers speaking to journalists, not at a scholarly conference or written as part of a refereed article. While selling flexibility and change, there are few such celebrations and advertisements for the small victories in reading, writing and thinking. Good teachers—who are not satisfied with students learning 'by themselves' or being permitted/encouraged/facilitated to miss lectures—must transgress and transform this digital diatribe to stretch ourselves and aim for higher standards. Learning is not 'done' via the internet. Learning is not 'done' through ipod earphones. Learning is not 'done' in a classroom. All learning is conducted in a context that constructs a scholarly and structured relationship between data, information and knowledge. It is the relationship between teachers and students that configures a learning environment. No one learns anything 'by themselves' or in isolation. The best scholars value the intellectuals that precede them, and demonstrate this scholarly allegiance and inheritance through research and dense footnotage. We as teachers should not accept the structures imposed by human resource managers and educational administrators who attempt to place a lifetime of learning and expertise into a weekly spreadsheet. The replacement of educational revelation with technological competency is a product of the managerial transformation of universities. In such an environment the sounds of education are even more important.

Socrates was not a believer in writing. He thought it created a lazy intellect and poor memory. It was left to Plato to write (about) Socrates and Aristotle to link thinking with reading. Socrates affirmed the specialness of oral and aural culture: he did not want thinkers to undermine its value and potential. Sound is a medium of communication that shadows the truths of our era. Its message is difficult to determine with precision, but facilitates the passion of the best popular music or the intense reflection and concentration of riveting public speeches. Sound slows our interpretation of words and ideas, heightens the awareness of our environment and encourages quiet interiority. Listening to music delves into our personal stories of loss, love and hope. Hearing waves crash onto a beach is simultaneously rhythmic, soothing and gothic. Laying in bed, just about to cross over into the twilight of sleep, we hear our breath and the flooded silence of a darkened house.

Follow me on this journey. At the conclusion of this paragraph, close your eyes. Wherever you are—in the easy

chair at home, in a library or sipping a long black coffee in an office, I want you to eliminate your visual engagement with the world—just temporarily—and become aware of the sonic layering in the environment. For one minute, be conscious of the sounds of undulating breath, and how it punctuates the soundscape. Close your eyes now.

Upon reopening access to the visual realm, there is a realization of the intricate complexity of sound about which we are frequently unaware. As the starkness of light and printed words are darkened, the pools of sound become more deep and resonant. The layering of sonic media, from the humming of a computer to the gentle sigh of our breath, encourages more dense and delicate interpretations of the world. Our ears arch out into space to position the body in distinct and new ways. Hearing sound—and processing that experience—activates intricate aural literacies.

Sound punctuates buildings, workplaces, leisure complexes and family life. It bleeds through the media—from film soundtracks to streamed university lectures. To map and mobilize sound requires concise interpretation of the critical approaches that allow us to understand its role in creating space, place and identity. When the visual bias of Western Culture is questioned, we hear sounds (and ideas) that have been ignored. As Paul Duncum (2004) has confirmed, "there are no exclusively visual sites" (p. 252). While popular music is an important part of this aural landscape, there are many contexts and modes of sound. Education rarely manages to utilize this sophistication. Formal educational structures, through primary and high school, are geared to develop the literacies in managing print. Monitoring and moderating the layering of aurality adds art and craft to education. Too often, we as teachers cheapen soundscapes with monotone verbal deliveries in lectures, interjected with stammering and confusion, and do not open our ears to the myriad other rhythms, melodies and textures in the sonic palette. Not surprisingly, digitization has only increased this tendency. I-lecture rollout is a case study of how the range of sonic media and the significance of sonic literacies is being cheapened and destroyed by the fast Fordism of education. The desire for standardization rather than standards, and compliance rather than complexity, needs the phrase 'flexible learning' to displace and hide the value of a disciplined, rigorous, motivated and—at times—ruthless commitment to activate learning.

An I-diots Guide to I-lectures

Lectures have taken a battering in the last few years. One of the oldest modes of teaching, lecturing is criticized because, as Peter Stearns (1996) suggested, "it establishes a hierarchy of authority between the lecturer and students and because it enjoins a rather passive learning mode on the audience" (p. 97). There are more positive interpretations of lecturing, particularly in establishing modes of intellectual leadership. Lectures are multi-modal formations, using sound, vision, gestures, and often scent and touch. As a space where people gather to think about complex ideas, the lecture has pivotal symbolic importance. Also, the 'passivity' of lectures is debatable.

Bad lecturers generate bad lectures. The best of lectures require research, intense preparation, mobilization of diverse media and rehearsal. We have all seen incompetent, lazy or nervous scholars write a few headings on the back of a cigarette packet and then walk into the auditorium. They should not be allowed to teach, as they bring our universities into disrepute. The best of lectures are informative, entertaining, persuasive and stimulating. Generally, each lecture I write takes about three weeks to gather the materials. Then they take three days to write from these notes, and five days to prepare the media and presentation. The research required for a good one hour lecture is immense. For the students, lectures develop skills in understanding and interpreting oral sources and evaluating the hierarchy of important information. The rest of our lives do not have an attached touchpad or mouse to scroll back to important ideas that we may have missed. Lectures layer ideas and media.

Technologies in education have three general functions: to present learning materials, to permit an interaction between learner and text, or to facilitate communication between learners and teachers. Precise and different educational strategies are required to enable each of these functions. These choices must be related to the aims of teaching and learning, not the limits of the technology. In this way, precise criteria are established for determining the effectiveness of a particular platform. It also provides a method to assess if change in educational practices and infrastructure is motivated by cost savings or a commitment to improving the learning for students. There are distinctions between technologies for teaching and for operational purposes.

From: Rita
Sent: Tuesday, 2 August 2005 3:57 PM
To: Tara Brabazon
Subject: iLecture for COM102?

Hello Tara,

My name is Rita ***** and im currently enrolled in COM102.. However, i have a timetable clash between this lecture and another and I am only able to alternate which lecture I go to every week. I was just wondering if the notes of the COM102 lecture will be available on WebCT or the lecture on iLecture? I'm trying to figure out if I am able to stay in both units. :)

Thanks for your time,

Rita

In this case, the point of i-lectures is for convenience. It is not linked with Rita's teaching and learning experience. The timetable clash would be easily solved if she enrolled in the distance or correspondence version of either of these 'clashing' units. Students have always had timetable clashes. They have not always had i-lectures.

For an institution, computers increase efficiency. Simply because email improves—or at least speeds up—the distribution of minutes from a meeting does not mean that it facilitates educational communication between the scholar and student. The language of instruction is different from the language of administration. Technologies for teaching are determined by and through the student's home environment and must be low cost. The audio-visual media are remarkably important to teaching and learning moments, but must be judiciously chosen. No technological platform—even a convergent one—intrinsically makes learning student centred. There are many methods to enable interaction between staff and students. For example, I teach sport and grant it a week of focus in several courses for creative industries, cultural and media studies. A mixed media presentation makes it profoundly successful. Analogue video was used in the lecture and tutorial. A song commenced the lecture—from the digital platform of a compact disc—but what I (and students) remember from the week are the soccer balls. Throughout the lecture and tutorials, several soccer balls move their way around the room. It adds a physicality and corporeality to the educational experience. Particularly for a group of young men and women in the course, they enjoy the physical movement of touching objects of sport while thinking about the industry and experience of sport. The digital streaming of the audio from this lecture could not capture the bodies and their physicality through the teaching sessions. Similarly, the fabrics used to teach fashion, the scents and smells deployed to explore semiotics and the dancing integral to the understanding of popular music are inappropriate to the digital compliance and standardization of webcast lectures.

Putting 'materials' online has been part of strategy to cut costs, not to 'freshen' teaching and learning. It also encourages bad—or at least strange—behavior:

From: Yuanetta
Sent: Thursday, 4 August 2005 6:04 PM
To: Tara Brabazon
Subject: Re: lecture notes

Hi Tara, just wanted to know if you post any notes on line from the lectures? I assumed you would so I made no attempt to write anything down from the previous lectures, so I'm having a bit of a panic, now that I can't find anything on the web.

If you don't, could I have access to the overheads you used so that I could make some notes, please? I'll come to your office at a time that's convenient for you.

Thank you

Yuanetta

I was wondering in the first two lectures why some students were sitting in the lecture theater with no paper, pen or bag, and staring at me. Why would first years students 'assume' anything about teaching and learning, particularly in the first few weeks of a university course? The notion that she expected notes would be available online means that technological platforms have become a replacement—a crutch—for learning. I do not make PowerPoint slides or notes available online because I do not want to read my words bounced back to me in assignments. In 'encouraging' independent thought and analysis, not their capacity to simply retext or cut and paste my ideas, there is no safety

net for students, except attending the lectures and tutorials and completing the course reading. The reason why my courses have low failure rates and many scholars go on to postgraduate study is no accident. I remove their choices—rather than encourage flexible learning. They do not have the choice to fail. They do not have the choice to be lazy. They do not have the choice to ignore the opportunities for thought, dialogue and debate that education provides. My courses teach a meta-lesson. Choices must be earned. First year students in particular need a structure for education. There is a need to learn how to learn, through overt discussions of their responsibilities.

I have always taught in this way. I have spent much of my life reading and working with cultural and critical literacy theory, so I know how to construct an effective curriculum for first years. But I was surprised why 2005 was so distinctive and different from earlier years, with students making odd choices about their learning, like deciding not to take notes during a lecture. I wondered why students had simply not read the required readings, and why there was desperation to download PowerPoint slides. There was only one difference between the teaching methods deployed by the university in 2004 and 2005. The arrival of i-lectures triggered poor decision making in first year students. They stopped completing course readings because the only 'reading' they believe was necessary was derived from PowerPoint slides and listening to an i-lecture from a session they missed. Attendance was not required because the audio delivery of the session is available, to which they may or may not listen. When I removed the 'flexibility' of not attending class and required them to read for their assignments, their assumptions shifted. The key with first year students is to reduce their learning choices, demonstrate the value of intellectual discipline, the necessity to complete wide-ranging reading, and to value the community integral to the building of scholarship.

There is a reason why students have a network of teaching and learning resources, including lectures, tutorials and required readings, rather than simply an i-lecture and PowerPoint slides. Together—analogue and digital, sound, vision and corporeality—they summon a textured landscape of scholarship. After students complete course reading, the lectures offers an interpretation of this reading and the tutorial allows students to independently dialogue with their peers, connecting their research to the lecturer's interpretation and the others in the group. It is a matrix of scholarship. Overheads and PowerPoint slides are not 'required reading.' They are a medium of interpretation, a skeleton of a lecture. Students like Yuanetta need to calm themselves and reassess their priorities. The issue for teachers to address is not student flexibility, but motivation.

Thinking about this relationship between teachers, students and curriculum is controversial. Inserting technology into that equation adds greater intensity. Obviously technology has always been part of education. But there are consequences for using particular platforms, hardware and software to make education location independent, a digi-space of i-lectures, ipods and PowerPoint slides. Whitehead (1932) argued that in "teaching you will come to grief as soon as you forget that your students have bodies" (p. 78). These words were written in 1932. While much has changed in the subsequent seventy five years, the creation of teaching moments, learning outcomes and social change necessitates a dense, incisive and humble tether to this past. It is sound, voice, rhythm, syncopation, melody, harmony and corporeality that have been the great casualties of education.

Hearing the Difference

In a lecture theater and tutorial room, our words are punctuated by bodies and gestures, appended by a diversity of sources including overhead transparencies or PowerPoint slides, moving and still images, music, rhythms, objects, scents and fabrics. At its best, teaching spaces activate all the senses. To remove this sensory complexity and focus on only sound and aural literacies necessitates a high level of pedagogic expertise and experience in sonic media. Norquay (1987) described this process and acknowledged that "writing for talk is different from the writing you do for print" (p. 1). Greater attention is placed on signposting the structure of the presentation, providing overt indicators that allow the listener to follow the development of an argument.

There is also more attention to voice, pace, pauses and intonation. It is a skill to make words spark off the page and appear as if they are not being read. A range of verbal techniques are necessary to compensate for a lack of body language. The aim is to encourage vocal variety and dynamism through rate, pace, volume, pitch, inflection and pause. Further, the use of short sentences for aural delivery, to forge a direct link between subject and predicate, is an imperative. These competencies are different from the characteristics of the archetypical bad lecturer, with a few comments prompted by headings on PowerPoint slides. This mode of 'preparation' encourages rambling ideas and sentences that do not end. Actually, good audio-only presentations are highly scripted, with each word crafted

and selected. Vocal training is also extremely important. A recorded voice is distinct from the vocal sounds we hear in daily life. Emotion and energy must be injected into the voice, to compensate for the lack of body language and props.

There is an explanation for this low grade sonic scholarship and the cheapening of sound in education. Lecturing is extremely difficult. It is not a performance. It is a very precise form of public speaking. The intensity of concentration is different from any other activity in life. No other event requires that level of preparation and focus. It is not an efficient use of time, but it is an important deployment of expertise. The mixed mode delivery—moving between print to vision, music to scents, fabric to a soccer ball—is incredibly stressful. After an hour, my clothes are saturated, and much to my embarrassment, I continue to sweat through the following two hour tutorial. While I focus on pulling my voice down to a lower register and slowing the delivery, there are myriad other teaching variables I also have to remember while watching student faces for mis/comprehension. Therefore, the delivery of teaching materials for the voice and ear alone requires a different sort of focus to the mixed modal lecture venue. The point is clear: time must be spent developing media resources for sonic media. Streaming a lecture—cutting the voice away from the body—is not only semiotically painful and inappropriate but creates poor quality educational resources.

Good lecturers have different skills to good broadcasters. Through professional development and training, teachers may develop sonic awareness and pedagogically-appropriate delivery. But good materials for the ear rarely emerge from a lecture theater. Lecturing is a different process from producing audio-only programming. Part of the ease with which lectures have been procured for audio streaming on the World Wide Web is a result of a misunderstanding of the specificity of the lecture as a venue for education. Jonathan Ross and Robert Schultz (2004) for example, attacked the lecture forum in their desire to celebrate the 'revolutionary' and 'transformational' nature of the internet for education.

> Unfortunately, however, the lecture format—a technique of covering content that is preferred by students with sequential, auditory processing abilities only—continues to dominate as a preferred form of teaching in many college classrooms. (P. 123)

There are flaws in this argument. Firstly, the most provisional lesson in semiotics teaches us that meaning is determined via the relationship between form and content, signifier and signified. There is no such entity as 'content' that exists without being shaped by form or media. Secondly, and most importantly, very few lecturers use only aurality. If they are present in the auditorium and brought their body along for the lecture, then there must be a visual component. To rewrite Helene Cixous, we speak the body. Our body must be heard.

There is a systematic discrediting of lectures as a public space for a community of scholars to come together to share ideas. Even human resources departments at universities are reducing the economic value of a lecture as part of an academic's palette of responsibilities. As an example, I am using the workload figures from my School and University for 2006. Academics on Teaching and Research Contracts spend 40% of their time teaching, 40% of their time researching and 20% on administration and community service. In 2006, my School constructed a figure of 760 points as representing a fulltime teaching load. It is a changeable number, but how academics reach that figure is significant. The following table presents the financial 'value' for a lecture within this scheme. The data is derived from the three levels of seniority in the Australian university system.

The only assumption I have made in this calculation is limiting the time of lecture preparation to four hours per week, with two hours to set up, present the session and answer queries at the end. That is a very conservative level of preparation. There has never been one lecture in my professional life that has taken as little as four hours to construct. However the resultant hourly 'rate' of a lecture's worth to the university is significant to note. The social and pedagogical 'value' of a lecture is represented in a telling fashion by its economic 'value.' It is no surprise that such a minor part of the university's work/load would be disrespected academically by shunting them online, on ipods, or removing them altogether from teaching and learning. The question of intellectual property rights and the 'value' of the content in lectures will be addressed later in this article, but for the moment we can understand why these sessions are moved around platforms so arbitrarily. There is an administrative and managerial miscomprehension of educational value.

Neither putting lectures online or on an analogue audio cassette was an effective use of these platforms. There are more effective methods to actualize the potential of sound, including the writing of specific material that works for the ear, undertaking professional training in the potential of the voice and recording the material with precision. This carefully prepared material opens out effective learning through the senses. Such time-consuming—but important—

strategies create a media-rich environment. These 'sonic sessions' as I call them are distinct from a lecture session. They are shorter in duration, and also far more reflexive in terms of their form and content relationship. Sound encourages reflection, not content-heavy data presentation. Therefore, I generally take one or two important topics in the week's teaching, offer an interpretation and a series of questions to consider, and conclude the sonic session. For example, here are three short extracts from the fourteen sonic sessions for my course Creative Industries.

Teaching loads, comparisons and calculations 2006

Details		**B Level Lecturer**			**Senior Lecturer**			**Associate Prof**	
Base Salary as of January 2006		$66,168			$79,705			$96,247	
	Teaching	Research	Admin	**Teaching**	Research	Admin	**Teaching**	Research	Admin
	40%	40%	20%	40%	40%	20%	40%	40%	20%
Proportion of Salary	$26,467	$26,467	$13,234	$31,234	$31,234	$15,941	$38,499	$38,499	$19,250
# Salary applicable to teaching	$26,467			$31,234			$38,499		
Total teaching in workload formula	760 pts			760 pts			760 pts		
Value in $ terms of one w/load point	**$34.82**			**$41.10**			**$50.66**		
1 hour lecture (2 pts) x 13 weeks of semester	26 points			26 points			26 points		
Total payment to lecturer for 13 lectures	$905.32			$1,068.60			$1,317.16		
Lecture preparation (4 hrs per week, plus 2 hrs set up and presentation (6hrs x 13 weeks)	78 hrs			78 hrs			78 hrs		
Hourly rate for lectures	**$11.60**			**$13.70**			**$16.88**		

This type of material encourages reflection and is intentionally distinct from lectures. Instead of developing this digital mode of teaching and learning, the imperative of i-lectures is to allow students who miss sessions to further disrespect the educational process and 'make up' for their poor attendance. It is also changing student's expectations of higher education. For example, the Ipswich campus of the University of Queensland was set up with the goal of flexible, wireless delivery of content. The consequences were enormous.

> While there is obvious preference for on-line learning at the Ipswich campus, the initial promotion of 'flexibility' led many—perhaps most—students to expect that they would not have to attend classes. Students became disgruntled with the notion of class attendance, and great efforts were made to accommodate them: in 2000, for example, night classes with

> just two or three students were run in various courses. Since 2001 a different view has been taken. (Contemporary Studies Programme 2003:25)

Inexperienced students will behave rashly, make poor judgments and cut corners if such options are made available. Instead, they must be reminded that their words and ideas matter, and how—with effort, care and respect for knowledge—they can make a difference. Similarly to the experience in Queensland Australia, a sophomore at Duke University, Ryan Sparrow, justified the use of his ipod.

> Sparrow explained one way he prepared for his presentation. "I downloaded the lectures from the [class Web site] and I put them on my ipod," he said. "One of them I listened to while I was at work at the Provost's office. I was upstairs in the attic doing some filing and I got to just listen to the lecture and take some notes." (The recording from Belkina's first lecture was particularly helpful for Sparrow, who had missed that class after staying up late to complete an engineering project.) (http://cit.duke.edu/ideas/newprofiles/lucic.do)

Sonic materials can be written specifically for the ipod in the memo function. They can incorporate questions, diverse sounds and material written specifically for the ear. The ipod has great potential for teachers and students. But to simply record lectures, with or without copyright approval from the lecturer, is not a strong deployment of sonic media platforms.

The ipod offers remarkable potential for education. Yet a concern to address is how to transform an instrument of leisure into a vehicle for learning. Instead, the rush to i-lectures, without attention to theories of student motivation, has propelled into an imperative for the ipod. There are other ways to use the slim white case with wheel menu. The gleaming white platform for digital compression files is not either intrinsically helpful or damaging for education. However, with good curriculum, it can be an avenue and place for the presentation of teaching and learning materials. The ipod has the potential to create a higher quality web-cast of audio content than the i-lecture, written and recorded specifically for that purpose. No lecture rooms need to be wired. Copyright concerns are discussed and explored more overtly. Staff can—through the ipod's microphone attachment—record material of reasonable quality, appropriate for the web and the cohort of students, and is a polished presentation written for that purpose. But such a scheme would require investment in staff training, not technology.

Ryan Sparrow was part of Duke University's scheme in August 2003 to give twenty gigabyte ipods to first year students. They were preloaded with orientation materials in spoken and text form, along with information about Duke's academic environment, student life and activities. While the primary way the ipod was used by students was to download music, it was being used for course work, recording lectures and interviews, organizing image and text files, and also became a portable hard drive. Audio books, including language dictionaries, allow the development of sonic literacies and broaden the experience of education into diverse sites of life.

The desire to digitize, categorize and codify analogue, mixed media lectures into an inappropriate audio format discredits the complexity of sound and the resistive and plural energy of a lecture space. Sounds require precise mapping and shaping of differences. It is not an 'enhancement' to internet education. It must be used carefully because sonic media has some disadvantages. The speed of listening is slower than reading. While this reflexive pace is effective when presenting abstract ideas, the overall structure of material is more difficult to track. Long monologues and dense factual material from lectures are difficult to capture through sonic media. Meacham and Butler (1988) described sound as a "means of personalizing material, providing variety and interest, and presenting information whilst the eyes are occupied elsewhere, or merely resting" (p. 2). The most effective use of aural sources occurs when they are integrated with other media to motivate students and personalize the delivery of the instructor. The (only) reason why audio analogue cassettes were useful for distributing lectures is that they were practical and cheap. The best use of audio is when objectives are clearly stated and the form and content are related to the learning outcomes of the course.

A.W. Bates, in reviewing the successes of the Open University, has presented one of the most significant historical investigation of sound in teaching. He explored the significance of media selection in distance education, including the history of audio cassettes for Open University courses. He stated that,

> Audio cassettes are low cost; all students already have facilities at home; they are easy for academics to produce, and cheap and simple to distribute; students find them convenient to use; and, when designed properly, they encourage student activity. (UK OU audio-cassettes are rarely lectures.) (Bates 1993:242)

There are lessons to be drawn from the Open University's use of audio cassettes. They were chosen because they

were low cost, accessible, able to be produced by academics without intervention from others, and convenient to use. Significantly, in terms of educational design, lectures were inappropriate in developing effective sound-based OU educational strategies. While institutional use of technology aims to improve efficiency and productivity, teaching technologies must be influenced by other directives such as the student's home environment. Audio cassettes were cheap. Broadband, ipods and computers are not. Attention is also required on how particular courses and student cohorts require different media for distinct learning outcomes. Bates established a checklist of six criteria through which to assess educational technology:

- Cost
- Learning effectiveness
- Availability to students
- User friendliness
- Place in the organizational environment
- Recognition of international technological inequalities (Bates 1993: 243)

Instead of deploying such modes of assessment, funding is cut from 'conventional' teaching budgets to promote web-based resources, thereby reducing the options of staff in maintaining the current diversity of mixed media. The illegality of webcasting and podcasting (copyrighted) sounds means that audio and visual materials from film and popular music are removed from conventional—corporeal—lectures. The plurality and density of 'old' media such as film, photographs and television—and their attendant literacies—is lost in a desire to render lectures uniform and legally downloadable.

The i-lecture—a platform developed by the University of Western Australia and being sold around the world—is an archetype of how and why web-based streaming of lectures is being deployed. I-lecture software digitally records a lecture and, through streaming, allows it to be heard via the World Wide Web. The system is automated, so that staff are not involved in—and implicitly cannot 'ruin'—the recording process. They simply switch on a microphone and recording commences, ceasing fifty minutes later. The media file is then transferred over the network from the lecture theater via the file transfer protocol (ftp). The recordings are compressed, uploaded and streamed to servers distributed over the network. Students then access these recordings. The reality is that—after eight years of web-based literacy and proliferation of hardware, software and wetware—staff have not yet developed 'the content' (or literacy) necessary to run a 'virtual' university. At least with i-lectures, 'content' is made available, without staff input or—more troubling—without training and professional development of academics.

I-ntellectual Property

Before a student records a lecture onto an ipod or a lecturer flicks the switch on the lectern for an i-lecture, intellectual property concerns punctuate the space between the lips and the microphone. Alan Albright, specialist in intellectual property litigation in the United States, asked of students, "Do they have permission from the person who wrote the lecture? That would be a copyright concern" (Albright in Shreeve 2005:44). Yet, the copyright and intellectual property rights of staff have been ignored and perhaps violated. Such transgressions are systematic of an institution created around technological change, not teaching expertise.

Overwork and over management have sliced through the profession of teaching. There is an assumption that administration is facilitating teaching. Actually, the inverse is the case. Mechanisms for coping, rather than innovation, are the imperative. It has been fascinating in the last few years watching university administrators trying to force academics to 'get materials online' without cutting their workload to encourage research and professional development. Compliance has been enforced through top-down policies, yet resistance emerges at the grassroots. Experienced staff are retiring, switching to part-time or leaving the system. They are managing change by relocating to another job. The long term costs to the systematic and structural degradation of the institution are enormous. We will not know what is lost until it is gone.

Even more seriously, universities—when managing the i-lecture project—have either overlooked or confused the issues of intellectual property rights and copyright. Teaching, and in particular lecturing, has not been configured as a scholarly act that creates and builds knowledge. While being guided by the same national law, different universities have assembled distinct rules and interpretations. For example, Macquarie University in Australia made the following

claim on their website:

> Staff engaged to teach can expect to have their voice captured, used and potentially reused to meet the needs of the university. (http://www.copyright.mq.edu.au/lecture/)

Macquarie has—without question or debate—claimed the intellectual property rights of academics over their own lectures. Simultaneously, they have also noted the copyright held by others in music and videos. They also confirm that "copyright is a type of personal property right that is founded on a person's creative work." (http://www.copyright.mq.edu.au/faq.html) By Macquarie University's definition, lectures are neither personal property nor creative work. The University of Western Australia, which developed the system, contradicts Macquarie's determination. Michael Neville and Michael Fardon cite Australian employment law, confirming that the works generated by an employee usually reside with the employer, but they also recognize that academic employment contracts differ from this determination. When the iLecture project was first undertaken at UWA, academic staff had all rights to their IP with the exception of digital works (e.g.: software) that remained with the university. A recent revision of regulations has seen the rights to recordings and papers being retained by the Academic with the University having a right to reuse the Intellectual Property. To address some teaching staff concerns that they would be made redundant by the recording process, the UWA iLectures team worked with teaching unit coordinators to get their view if recordings should be retained from year to year. To date this has been successful in keeping teaching staff involved in the process. Clear IP policies acceptable to teaching staff are critical to garnering their support for the lecture recording process. (http://ilectures.uwa.edu.au/misc/NevilleFardon_Educause_N48.pdf)

Significantly, the Law School at Melbourne University has not enforced or assumed the institution's intellectual property rights over i-lectures. Instead, the School confirms that "it is essential to note that iLecture is an opt-in capability. Only if an academic staff member chooses to have their class included, will it be recorded and made available on the web." (http://www.law.unimelb.edu.au/iss/informationsystems/services/ilecture/) Such a strategy smoothly detours a discussion of a lecturer's intellectual property rights and copyright.

Digitization raises these intellectual property rights issues because it is extremely simple to reproduce and distribute sounds and images. Such an ease in uploading, downloading, streaming and saving is not well managed within copyright law, which is based on the concept of a single identifiable author. In the United States, there is a tradition that the Faculty owns their own creative written works, with the exception of patents and inventions. With the commercialization of intellectual property online, this right may be challenged. The debate resonates provocatively with the copyright issues involved in the ownership of online course material. Without a clear and unambiguous contract, monitoring intellectual property rights remain a difficulty (Holmes 2000). By the Australian Copy Act of 1968, copyright material may be used without the owner's permission only if it is by 'fair dealing' (Australian Copyright Council 2003). The ambiguity of this phrase does not assist university administrators and academics in the process of knowledge ownership. In the United States however, intellectual property rights have assisted academics in asserting their ownership of teaching materials (Pietrykowski 2001).

Organizational conflict is a major and understated problem in our universities. Conflicts over processes and tasks—or teaching loads—are symptoms of an organizational culture in disarray or discord. By continually stressing the new and the innovative, the intellectual capital that staff have built through years of experience is undermined. Validating technological change through economic savings or—frequently unsubstantiated—student interest will not encourage already overworked staff to work harder, particularly when their experience has been denied in the past. What makes i-lectures successful, or any other software application that facilitates the web-based audio streaming of lectures, is how it is justified, managed and valued in universities. Academic knowledge and teaching are not respected while issues of intellectual property rights and copyright law are either ignored or handled differently by distinct universities. Actually, copyright law applies to all recorded materials. Stunningly, Australian universities have assumed that academic staff will obtain—and pay for—the clearance of copyrighted materials, but that they will not be compensated for their own intellectual property being moved and traded through digital platforms. That is, staff pay for the right to use materials from which the university gains profit through the uploading of i-lectures and downloading onto ipods.

> You are responsible for obtaining appropriate permission for all material delivered by the iLecture Recording System. This includes copyright clearance and/or payments for any material that you have requested to be recorded. (http://ilecture.unsw.edu.au/FREQUENTLY%20ASKED%20QUESTIONS.CFM?DC=5)

This remarkable situation has not been challenged by staff or their unions. For academics working in media-related fields, this is an expensive disaster. Why should individual staff be responsible for funding material to improve the institutional quality of university teaching?

Copyright law is based on a single identifiable author. A lecturer is clearly the author of the material they deliver. In U.K. law—through the Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988—a low level of originality is required (Stokes 2004). A lecture would easily fall within this law. The only acknowledgement of this major issue, particularly when administered by managers demanding compliance, is that students will be unable to save and copy the whole recording of streamed i-lectures. The mistakes in interpreting the law are compounded through a miscomprehension of technology. Not only are there tools to rip streams, but the most basic of digital recorders like an ipod can create a good copy of streamed audio. The ipod can then be plugged into a USB slot to generate a wav file. This file can then be placed on the web, to be downloaded at will. Now, without handling the concerns with the i-lectures platform, there has been a fast movement to the ipod. Through this platform, there is no question that MP3 files can be copied. Because intellectual property rights were not addressed through i-lectures, this disregard continues to the next 'innovation.'

Student Learning: New Ways to Miss the Point

> Universities are in the information dissemination business and computers are changing the way they work.
> — M. Gordon Hunter and Peter Carr (2000:50)

Hunter and Carr's statement is punchy, provocation and enticing. It is also wrong. Universities develop new knowledge, not only reproduce it. University academics have functions and roles distinct from other teachers in the educational sector. They not only disseminate information, but are involved in the creation of knowledge through research. Too often these functions of academic life are partitioned. Instead, research and teaching conflate, dialogue and spark innovative theories. Such a misunderstanding of scholarly functions serves to devalue the multiple sites of academic's knowledge production, including lectures. If scholars simply reproduced the information of others, then issues of intellectual property rights and cultural value would not be as significant.

Perhaps the best explanation of how we reached this point in the ipodification of education is revealed by Rachel Johnson in her analysis of the contemporary university as a workplace (Johnson 2003:289-314). She demonstrates the consequences of senior manager-academics being removed from daily contact with students. Because of this displaced reality, university management makes many assumptions about students, such as the demand for flexibility. Concurrently—and conveniently—'flexible learning' is a cheaper option than employing well-trained and credentialed scholars. International ranking systems, such as the Research Assessment Exercise in the United Kingdom or the Research Quality Framework in Australia, serves to increase the attention and value of research over teaching. Research is becoming a resource input for a university, whereas teaching is a cost. The result of this ideology is that academic staff are being asked to do more with less money, and are valued less for the work that they complete. This is not the time or environment to demand that staff lose intellectual property rights and 'fit in' with administrative directives.

The i-lecture is a symptom of a financially-starved university sector, employing overworked staff, enrolling under-inspired students and cutting costs in professional development. Instead of academics developing—with time, precision and consideration—materials that utilize the specific attributes of the web such as hypertext links, the i-lecture is a cheap, inappropriate, and low quality application for education. It confirms that the e-ducation revolution never arrived. The only managerial option was to upload already existing—analogue—lectures, ignoring intellectual property rights, and hope no one would notice. By taking the creation, management and distribution of content out of the hands of academics, the language of teaching and learning changes. Suddenly "web content management" replaces well-theorized and delivered scholarship. Universities are making specific assumptions about students having home access to not only computers and ipods, but the literacy to manage the downloading and the management of sonic educational materials. Ironically, while forgetting about the classed and age-based inequalities manifested through the internet, i-lectures were justified by the University of Western Australia as providing an "equality of access, regional programs and expansion into international markets." (http://www.unsw.innovationxchange.com.au/page.print.html?article_id=00000000483) This 'equality argument' has been now lost, through the breaking of

this link. The digital divide accurately shadows analogue inequalities (Kapitzke 2001). The assumption of Broadband availability, and even a reliable telephone system, cannot be made in rural and regional Australia.

Without a nod to, or recognition of, these concerns, a prototype for i-lectures is offered for public 'view.' http://ilectures.uwa.edu.au/ilectures/ilectures.lasso?ut=726&id=33817

The University of Western Australia, which developed i-lectures, presented this link as the best practice and exhibition of their product. The example presented is Paul Crompton's lecture on "Inflation." The expectations I brought to this review process before clicking open the sound file are important to recognize. I had predicted that the i-lecture presentation would be dry and poorly deploying sonic media and literacies, but technologically competent. I intended to evaluate the i-lecture through the use of voice, the mixed media deployment of PowerPoint slides, the use of the visualizer and consider how the aural delivery was paced and structured. This criteria of assessment was derailed in a remarkable way. The shock of my displaced expectations was stunning.

I accessed this site from a dial-up connection, rather than through the broadband connection at my university office. The sound dropped out through the streaming process. The lecture did not commence at the start of the session, but approximately 90 seconds into the recording. The 'visual component' was a graph which was drawn and augmented in scattered and irregular 'stream time,' not real time. The prototype—either implicitly or explicitly—did not present copyrighted material or address the consequences of doing so. The choice of lecture topic—inflation—meant that the difficulties in gaining permission for the use of film or television extracts were not hinted or suggested.

The great surprise through this process was the extraordinarily poor quality of the streamed recording and the lecture performance itself. I had assumed that—considering that this prototype was being used to sell the application—it would be a gleaming example of a fine speaker, a riveting topic and a seamless presentation of the streamed session. Instead, the lecture was poorly structured and not well-delivered. This example was used—I assume—because the lecturer deployed 'the visualizer.' Once more the hardware was prioritized over other wetware of form, voice and topic. The tool was used, but not well. It seems that within this model of educational discourse, the technology 'itself' is always enough, rather than evaluating the quality of the use. The hand movements around the graph were jilted and distracting. The viewer never saw the lecturer, the students or anything that actually moved. Beyond the visual realm, the sound quality was poor. Hundreds of sentences were distorted through the dial-up connection—the connection that most students use from home. The scroll bar also encourages bad behaviour. Students—bored with the audio-only delivery—can scroll through the lecture without listening to it. Certainly this process is convenient, but it does not facilitate learning.

The silent issue of the i-lecture discourse as it moves into the ipodification of education is how easily the community of scholars and the excitement of learning have been traded for flexibility. Education is about creating relationships. There is an implicit—and occasionally explicit—realization that the i-lecture will lead to compromises and the university authorities are prepared to accept this. Until I opened up the streamed lecture, I was not aware of the scale of these compromises. The i-lecture may permit viewing of PowerPoint slides. It may permit some graphs to be viewed through the visualizer. The one attribute it does not permit is the clear and uninterrupted presentation of the human voice. The i-lecture can do a great many things, except present a lecture.

The accelerated realities of university education are taking hold. Students expect lectures to be made available for consumption. They claim—as our paying clients—that they have a right to demand service even if they are lazy, poorly-motivated, bored or skewed in their priorities. A student—with some horror—asked me before a first-year lecture in 2005, "But what happens if we miss your lecture and it is not available on i-lecture?" My reply was curt, but I think tethers to the core of our current problems in teaching and learning. I replied—with a smile—"if you make a decision to miss the lecture, then that is fine. But there are consequences for your actions." Confusion filled her face. Needless to say, the attendance at my lectures was high, excellent assignments were submitted and a fine cohort of students were produced who cared about the topics and each other. Without connecting student behavior and scholarly consequences, teaching and learning will not function. Education is not convenient. Learning is frequently not pleasant. Asking students who are enrolled in a university course to be on campus for 150 minutes in a week is not curtailing their life choices. The opportunities for avoidance that we have created will not help these students in the long term. Let me explain. I attended university during a kinder time for capitalism. There was still full-time and permanent work, universal health care coverage and a reasonably functional welfare state. Yet the education system in which I was enrolled was ruthless. If the assignment was late, then it would not be marked. I remember students on multiple occasions being expelled from tutorials for not completing the reading. We rarely saw our teachers outside of class time. We had to work it out for ourselves. It was an environment of fear: a fear of failure. At the very time that capitalism was benevolent, the university system was preparing us for the ruthless inequalities we would confront

upon leaving the leafy campus.

Now that there are wars on terror, casualized workplaces, little union protection for workers and an economy based on credit card debt, universities are soft, kind and cuddly institutions, shielding our students from the dire scale of social injustice. At the very time that we mouth the rhetoric that universities prepare students for the workplace, we are actually masking the sickening inequalities, injustices and disrespect that is the marinade of contemporary life. Actually, if we failed more students, expelled them from classrooms for not doing the reading, and demanded their presence on time and on topic, then we would be preparing them for the workforce. When bosses expect i-work for their i-salary, then i-lectures on an ipod may have a place.

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The Political Economy of Knowledge: Neglecting Politcal Economy in the Age of Fast Capitalism (As Before)

Robert Babe

In some ways postmodernist/poststructuralist thought is the ontology best supporting and depicting today's fast capitalism. Fast capitalism depends, after all, on the volume, speed, and territorial expanse of digitized communication networks, on reduced time for product cycles, on accelerating speeds of style and model changes, and perhaps most importantly on imagery embedding mythic meanings onto the banality of mass produced consumer items. Postmodernist/poststructuralist thought, likewise, addresses and presumes the fluidity, speed, exponential growth in, and easy transformation of symbolic structures in a digital age. [1]

Some maintain that postmodernist/poststructuralist thought, which began entering the mainstream of many American disciplines in the early 1980s, constitutes a huge break from the modernist and Enlightenment traditions (Webster 1995:163-75). In a number of ways this is true. The Enlightenment presumed, for example, that material reality exists independent of human thought, and that humans can learn about this reality by applying the (Baconian) scientific method of induction and deduction. For many postmodernists, by contrast, human culture is all-encompassing; we cannot stand outside culture.

However, I argue here, this cavernous dichotomy in ontology notwithstanding, since fast capitalism is still capitalism one can expect also to find deep-seated continuities between postmodernist thinking, especially as it becomes increasingly mainstream, and what went before. For as political philosopher C.B. Macpherson insisted (1978), mainstream discourses normally support or "justify" the prevailing political-economic order (pp. 11-12). Indeed, for Macpherson, such is their primary purpose.

Although the innovators of postmodernist discourses may very well have understood their project as constituting a radical break with the past, [2] and although contemporary critical postmodernists undoubtedly intend their work to challenge existing power structures, norms and received wisdoms, postmodernist thought can also, I will argue, be turned rather easily into a paradigm propping up established power, war, gross inequality and other forms of injustice, and indeed this is exactly what we should expect as it continues to enter mainstream discourses. Such is the dialectic of postmodernist thought.

I begin this paper by focusing on mainstream American media/communication/cultural studies scholarship as they evolved over the last 100 years to demonstrate the veracity of Macpherson's insight regarding dominant discourses sustaining established power. In so broad a survey I can, of course, touch down but briefly on key phases, but the upside is that clear patterns, indeed constancies, emerge. The period certainly witnessed dramatic changes in the predominant means of mediated communication—from local to regional and then to national press systems, the rise of cinema and broadcasting, and more recently the inauguration of computer communications, digitization, and the internet. Moreover, modes of transmission significantly expanded in capacity and in distance capability, with digital communication satellites being perhaps the apotheosis of that trend. For these reasons alone one could expect major revolutions in mainstream media/cultural studies scholarship.

But, to repeat, the fast capitalism of today is still capitalism, and if mainstream scholarship in the social sciences and humanities indeed tends to support prevailing structures of political-economic power, then deep-

seated constancies over time should be evident in that scholarship—despite fundamental changes in the modes of communication. I argue here, then, that as the predominant media of communication evolved from print, to film/broadcasting, to today's globalizing, digitized electronic communication, so too did mainstream scholarship in cultural and media studies, but in ways that consistently ignored disparities in communicatory power. At each stage, moreover, as I will point out, mainstream paradigms were belied by both real world events and practices, and by marginalized scholarship, making all the more convincing the political economy of knowledge thesis developed here.

The continuous neglect of political-economic aspects of information, media, communication, and culture is evident despite the fact (or more accurately, one suspects, due to the fact) that communication and culture have long been central to American wealth generation, governance, and foreign policy. Before documenting the argument, then, it is worthwhile speculating on reasons for this continuous inattention. To focus, for example, on asymmetries internationally in communicatory and cultural power would be to put into question, at least implicitly, the legitimacy or justness of those asymmetries, whereas to ignore them, obscure them, or to deem them insignificant makes seem more apt "free trade" in cultural "commodities"—a mainstay certainly of the official, "liberal," American paradigm. Similarly, to draw attention to domestic media ownership concentrations and to the role of advertising in "filtering" news and other content would be to raise grave doubts about the state of American democracy.

Today, the age of fast capitalism, the political economic stakes of influencing or controlling communication and culture grow exponentially. By the same token, the neglect of political economy in much of American media scholarship becomes all the more severe. It is in this context that an appraisal of postmodernist/poststructuralist scholarship needs to be undertaken, for by extrapolating past experience one can foresee a pronounced tendency for postmodernist thought, as it becomes ever-more mainstream, to likewise aid and abet domination by the political-corporate elite.

The Chicago School in the Age of Print

Standard histories of American communication/media studies begin by referencing the "Chicago School" of John Dewey, Robert Park and Charles Cooley (Czitrom 1982; Delia 1987; Hardt 1992; Rogers 1994 Carey 1996). For some intellectual historians, the Chicago theorists were foundational; for others, they were but precursors, or even merely "forefathers of the forefathers" (Schramm 1997:107). But virtually unanimously, the Chicago theorists are seminal.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, Dewey, Park, and Cooley inquired broadly from humanist perspectives into the role of media in American society. They viewed society as an organism, whose citizens are bound together through networks of transportation (likened to blood vessels) and communication (likened to nerves). They were progressivist theorists speculating on how technological change, particularly emerging media of communication, could and would enlighten citizens, foster community, and increase democracy. According to Dewey (1927), "the Great Society created by steam and electricity may be a society, but it is no community … Communication alone can create a great community" (pp. 98, 141).

Indeed, Dewey seemed to hold to a doctrine of inevitable human betterment through technological change. Technologies, he opined, are instruments to solve problems, and as the problems change, so do the instruments. Through this doctrine of instrumentalism, he gave short shrift to other possibilities—war, domination and subordination through technological means, ecosystem collapse. The chief failing of the Chicago School, according to Czitrom (1982), was its "refusal to address the reality of social and economic conflict in the present" (p. 112). Tellingly, Dewey's plans for Thought News—a newspaper that "shall not go beyond the fact; which shall report thought rather than dress it up in the garments of the past," and that would use philosophic ideas as "tools in interpreting the movement of thought; which shall treat questions of science, letters, state, school and church as parts of one moving life of man" (Williams 1998:30)—never came to fruition.

Without Macpherson's insights, the naïve technological optimism of the Chicago theorists would be difficult to comprehend, given the uses to which media and other technologies were then being put. In 1917, for example, acting on the advice of Walter Lippmann, the Wilson Administration created the Committee on Public Information (CPI) as the government's propaganda arm for the Great War. CPI produced hundreds of ads promoting the war effort and pressured newspapers into giving it free advertising space. It distributed thousands of official news releases and war-related public interest stories. It even published its own newspaper (Ewan 1996:111-113). Meanwhile, the

commercial press was "continually silenced by orders and prosecutions;" war critics were arrested, "often without warrants, hustled off to jail, held incommunicado without bail …" (Beard and Beard 1930).

The war years, however, were not exceptional. They were, rather, fulfilling a nascent "control revolution" (Beniger 1986) that began prior to the turn of the century whereby image-based advertising of addictive and non-addictive branded products presented "a nether realm between truth and falsehood … The world of advertisements," according to Jackson Lears (1983), "gradually acquired an Alice-in-Wonderland quality" (p.21)—harbinger of postmodernist simulacra.

Writing contemporaneously with the Chicago School was Dewey's former student and arch nemesis, journalist Walter Lippmann. In his influential 1922 tome, Public Opinion, Lippmann argued that most of us, most of the time, live in a "pseudoenvironment," defined as the "way in which the world is imagined … a hybrid compounded of 'human nature' and 'conditions'" (Lippmann 1965:17). On the one hand, Lippmann (1965) proposed, people inadvertently construct pseudoenvironments by unconsciously imposing stereotypes and preconceptions onto the reality around them; on the other, pseudoenvironments are purposefully fabricated for popular consumption by media practitioners skilled in manipulating symbols (p. 133). Lippmann foreshadowed such postmodernist constructs as simulacra and hyperreality.

Moreover, he was a precursor to the "crisis of democracy" position, as forwarded decades later by Zbigniew Brzezinski (1970) and the Trilateral Commission (Crozier, Huntington and Watanuki 1975) [3] and arguably as responded to by neoconservative governments through trade agreements (Barlow and Clark 1997) and antiterrorism legislation (Roberts 2005:F1-F5). [4] For Lippmann, democracy had turned a corner (he called it "a new image of democracy"), as experts now garnered popular consent for their policies by skillfully manipulating pseudoenvironments while leaving untouched the popular illusion that citizens were in charge of their destinies. Lippmann saw these deceptions as necessary for governance in the modern age, and in so contending he helped inspire, or at least "justify," the public relations/image manufacturing industries which constitute cornerstones of today's "hyperreality."

A major problem in openly constructing pseudoenvironments along the lines suggested by Lippmann, of course, concerns the distaste many Americans felt and feel regarding oligarchy and manipulation; as Lippmann remarked (1965): "The desire to be the master of one's own destiny is a strong desire" (p. 195). A second difficulty concerns incredulity of audiences. Better, then, to construct pseudoenvironments surreptitiously. One way of doing this is to incorporate into them the fiction that democracy persists, that people remain in control. It is in this context that the second generation media scholars, led by such towering figures as Paul Felix Lazarsfeld and Elihu Katz, can be viewed.

Lippmann was an advancement over the Chicago School in the sense that an at least truncated political economy formed a cornerstone of his media analysis. In his own way, however, Lippmann was every bit as naïve as Dewey; while convinced that cultures (pseudoenvironments) can and must be manufactured by elites to secure popular consent, until his later years Lippmann guilelessly presumed that the policies made possible thereby would be largely beneficent and centered on the common good. Only the prolonged war in Vietnam dissuaded him of that delusion (Blum 1984:9).

Era of Movies and Broadcasting

The Empirical School

Minimal Effects. The Chicago theorists' influence waned by the early 1930s. It became increasingly difficult to sustain a posture of inevitable progress through advancing technology in the face of World War I devastations, the use of media for advertising, public relations and propaganda, and the onset of the Great Depression. Not to be discounted, as well, was the impact of Lippmann's Public Opinion. Reviewing the book in 1922, Dewey himself declared: "The manner of presentation is so objective and projective, that one finishes the book almost without realizing that it is perhaps the most effective indictment of democracy as currently conceived ever penned" (Dewey 1922:286-88).

In the 1930s, therefore, born out of the government's psychological warfare activities of the First World War, a less idealistic, more pragmatic paradigm of media studies came to the fore. The emerging literature eschewed speculating on how media would contribute to community, democracy, enlightenment and human betterment, to

focus instead on persuasion, psychological manipulation, and marketing. World War II, likewise, was a boon to the new breed of media scholars, many of whom were complicit with the U.S. government's propaganda activities during and continuing after that war. Simpson (1994) lists the following, among others, as eminent American communication/media scholars working for or with the U.S. military on psychological warfare during World War II: Harold Lasswell, Hadley Cantril, Rensis Likert, Leonard Doob, Wilbur Schramm, Leo Lowenthal, Paul Felix Lazarsfeld, Frank Stanton, George Gallup, Elmo Roper, Ithiel de Sola Pool, Daniel Lerner, Edward Shils, Carl Hovland, Louis Gutman, Robert Merton (pp. 26-9)—a virtual Who's Who of American communication studies.

Given connections with the U.S.military, and their focus on persuasive communication, it might at first seem surprising that the sole media "law" these researchers devised was the "law of minimal effects," as "discovered" by Lazarsfeld. Arguably, his study, The People's Choice (Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet 1944) and its main finding concerning "minimal effects" responded, albeit implicitly, to (1) concerns raised by the Payne Fund Studies (1920s) on the deleterious effects of movies on children (sleep disturbance, negative influences on attitudes and behavior, emotional stimulation, presentation of nonmainstream moral standards), (2) continued overt domestic as well as foreign propaganda and psychological warfare, including but certainly not limited to Hitler's use of radio, loudspeaker, pageantry, film, art, sound and light shows to mesmerize a nation, and (3) the panic generated by Orson Welles's 1938 Halloween radio adaptation of "War of the Worlds." All these, were they not neutralized, could either undermine belief in the existence of American democracy in an age of media manipulation, or lead to restrictions on the freedom of media owners and advertisers, or both.

Paul Felix Lazarsfeld (1901-1976) was a Viennese social psychologist who emigrated to the United States in the 1930s. His major research interest was marketing, and he set up both the Princeton Office of Radio Research (1937) and the Columbia University Bureau of Applied Social Research (1939) to further his studies. Lazarsfeld's bureaus received funding from the Rockefeller Foundation which was used to launder funds from the CIA (Simpson 1994: 81), the radio networks, newspaper publishers, marketing firms, and polling companies. He and his associates investigated questions such as: audience demographics, satisfactions that audiences attain from radio, and correlations between audience tastes and social stratification. Large portions of Lazarsfeld's research was intended to aid media companies gain audiences and help advertisers and public relations firms become more adept at moulding audience tastes and opinions. Lazarsfeld was, then, an empirical social scientist whose mission was, one might say, to help elites structure Lippmann-style pseudoenvironments and ascertain how effective these were in affecting behavior and opinion. Indeed, Lazarsfeld (1941) coined the term, "administrative research" to denote the type of work he performed and to distinguish that from "critical research," [5] defined later in this paper. "More than anyone else," writes Czitrom (1982), "he [Lazarsfeld] shaped the field of communications research in the next decade" (p. 129). Hardt (1992) agrees: "Under Lazarsfeld's leadership communication research in the United States [became] a formidable enterprise which was deeply committed to the commercial interests of the culture industry and the political concerns of government" (p. 114).

The People's Choice, Lazarsfeld's seminal 1944 panel study, investigated voter intention and behavior in the context of election propaganda. Lazarsfeld et al claimed that "activation" of latent predispositions and "reinforcement" of preexisting attitudes were the main consequences of election publicity. Significantly, Lazarsfeld and associates maintained that only "conversion" from prior intentions should be considered important in terms of media effects, and since conversion was barely evident in the panel studies for the 1940 landslide presidential election (Roosevelt versus Wilkie) the authors concluded that media effects "are really quite limited" (Lowery and DeFleur 1988:102). For four decades thereafter, "'limited effects' was a major defense of owners of new media technologies, including television, from government regulation in the United States" (Chaffee and Hochheimer 1985:75).

In addition, in The People's Choice Lazarsfeld et al developed the "two-step flow" model of mass communication, elaborated later in Personal Influence by Lazarsfeld and Elihu Katz (1955). That model proposed that the attitudes of most people are not influenced directly by media, but rather by opinion leaders with whom they are in personal contact. Mainstream media scholarship built on that premise, modifying it however in distinctly antipolitical economy ways. Soon there appeared the multi-step model of diffusion, as forwarded by researchers such as Everett Rogers and Floyd Shoemaker (1971). The new model proposed that "the ultimate number of relays between the media and final receivers is variable" (Littlejohn:351), which is to say that general audiences were hypothesized as being even further removed from direct media influence than proposed by the two-step flow.

As well as suiting the needs of the broadcasting and motion picture industries, mainstream media scholarship helped assuage the democratic aspirations of the American citizenry. Even though millions of dollars were spent each year on media advertising and PR with the intent of affecting audience behavior and understanding, solace for

democrats could found in the "law of minimal effects" and in the two-stage/ multi-stage flow: Citizens remained in charge of their destinies despite persuasion and attempted manipulation at every turn, they were told. The minimal effects model also played into the hands of U.S. foreign and trade policy in countervailing cultural protectionists around the world, including UNESCO; more on this below.

The People's Choice suffered from major methodological flaws, misconstruing "activation" and "reinforcement" as insignificant consequences of media exposure being but one: to reinforce the status quo and to generate active support in place of tacit approval are obviously desiderata from the standpoint of governing elites. Even more telling is the fact that a large proportion of the interviewees stated that media were the single most important influence on their voting intentions, not "opinion leaders," a finding that Lazarsfeld duly reported but overlooked in drawing conclusions. Perhaps most significantly, however, a "law" of media effects based on a panel study carried out in Erie county Ohio during a lopsided election campaign is, to say the least, overdrawn. Nonetheless, Lazarsfeld's conclusion remained for decades the received wisdom in media studies, with Joseph Klapper's The Effects of Mass Communication (1960) perhaps marking "the watershed" (Chaffee and Hochheimer 1985:95).

The "law of minimal effects" was, in effect, an umbrella term—a prophylactic—under which on-going research into how the public's beliefs and perceptions can be manipulated was carried out. Notable among that activity were Carl Hovland's experiments during and after the War, funded by the U.S. military and the Rockefeller Foundation. According to Lowery and DeFleur (1983), between 1946 and 1961 Hovland's research team conducted over fifty experiments regarding persuasive communication (p. 138). Significantly, in their commentary introducing this research to undergraduates four decades later, Lowery and DeFleur (1988), evidently without intended irony, assert:

> Once new principles [of persuasion] were uncovered, they could then be used by pragmatic, innovative Americans to make a better world for everyone. ... There was much work to be done by social and behavioral scientists. The world was still filled with prejudice, discrimination, and bigotry. And now that nuclear weapons were a reality, the task of improving relationships between peoples seemed more urgent than ever. Badly needed, for example, was a better understanding of how people's beliefs, attitudes, and behavior could be modified in socially approved ways through carefully designed persuasive communication (p. 137).

Other mainstream research programs during this period pertained to content analyses of propaganda (Harold Lasswell), survey techniques and the measurement of public opinion (George Gallup, Elmo Roper), audience and market research (Lazarsfeld), and decision-making in small groups (Kurt Lewin). Although variegated, the research had commonalties: it was positivist and empirical, it was methodologically individualist, and it focused on means of changing attitudinal/behavior/belief. It was, one might say, in direct contradiction to the "law of minimal effects."

The "law of minimal effects" was belied not only by on-going research, but as well by practices and premises of media companies. Broadcasters sold advertising, for example, on the basis that "activation" was an important and sought after consequence of media exposure; corporations hired PR professionals to "reinforce" corporate images as well as to "convert" audiences during periods of crisis management—the Rockefeller interests' media activities following the Ludlow Massacre being seminal in this regard (Zinn 2005:355-57). From the 1930s through the 1960s, moreover, an intense multi-media campaign of anticommunist indoctrination was waged on domestic audiences by the U.S. government and media corporations, entailing censorships, persecutions of media celebrities and academics, and the production/distribution of anticommunist materials in the guises of entertainment and "news," all on the presumption that media have strong effects (Barson 1992; Schwartz 1998).

The period also saw the rise of an oppositional, albeit marginalized, communication scholarship. In 1948 Dallas Smythe began teaching the first course anywhere on the political economy of communication, although discretion dictated that for several years the course bear the title, "The Economics of Communications" (Lent 1995:43). In the course Smythe focused primarily on electronic communication—telegraph, telephone, radio broadcasting—and on radio spectrum allocation. [6] His concerns were how these fields were organized, how they interrelated as industries, and the development of public policy, particularly at the domestic (American) level, but internationally as well (Smythe 1957). Over time Smythe was joined at Illinois by critical scholars George Gerbner (in 1956) and briefly by Herbert Schiller (in 1960), and a coherent, oppositional, albeit marginal, American critical media studies scholarship was born. Gerbner, particularly, challenged directly the "law of minimal effects." He maintained that in contemporary society people attain their identities not from their families, schools, churches and communities, but from "a handful of conglomerates who have something to sell." He claimed further that people who watch large amounts of television are more likely to believe that the world is mean and violent, and he backed these contentions up with prodigious empirical studies (Morgan 2002). In congressional testimony of 1981 he summarized: "Fearful

people are more dependent, more easily manipulated and controlled, more susceptible to deceptively simple, strong, tough measures and hard-line postures. They may accept and even welcome repression if it promises to relieve their insecurities. That is the deeper problem of violence-laden television." (Associated Press 2006:B4).

Uses and Gratifications. Although the "minimal effects" model declined by the 1960s due to methodological problems, conflicting evidence (such as provided by Hovland and Gerbner), and overdrawn conclusions, another theory, namely "uses and gratifications," that had been waiting in the wings since the 1940s promptly took its place, becoming "one of the most popular theories of mass communication" (Littlejohn:364). [7] As noted by Wimmer and Dominick (2005), uses and gratifications focused attention on audience members, as opposed to message senders (chap. 18), or indeed for that matter on messages (Littlejohn:364). Christopher Simpson attributes the rebirth of "uses and gratifications" to a 1959 paper by RAND Corporation researcher, W. Phillips Davison (Simpson:91); in any event, by 1968 and publication of Television in Politics: Its Uses and Influences by Blumler and McQuail, "uses and gratifications" was mainstream.

Unlike minimum effects, "uses and gratifications" did not deny the possibility of profound consequences of media on audiences; what it asserted, rather, was that consequences are anticipated and actively sought out by audiences in light of preexisting needs and desires (Katz and Gurevitch 1974:12). Once again, audiences remain in control, at least according to mainstream theory, obviating concerns regarding the machinations of message senders.

Sponsors of research into persuasive communication, however, understood "uses and gratifications" at a more pragmatic level, of course. To affect or control public attitudes and behavior, message senders (molders of pseudoenvironments) must first offer audiences something they need or desire. According to the "uses and gratifications" school, uses of television programming, for example, include: attaining information, gaining a sense of personal identity (as through role modeling), facilitating social interaction, and being entertained (Chandler 1994). Each of these "uses," however, has major, albeit under-emphasized, even unacknowledged, political economy implications: "Attaining information," for example, undoubtedly a goal of newspaper readers and many television viewers, begs the question of what news /information is made available to these inquiring minds and what is not—questions addressed with telling results in analyses of news content by such marginalized political economists as Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky (1988). As Walter Lippmann (1965) remarked, "News and truth are not the same thing, and must be clearly distinguished; the function of news is to signalize an event, the function of truth is to bring to light the hidden facts…" (p. 226). One of the factors causing a disparity between news and truth, Lippmann (1965) proposed, is the control exercised over reporters by media owners (p. 227), who in turn are responsive to desires of advertisers, both individually and as a system. Decades after Lippmann's Public Opinion was published, Chomsky and Herman denoted advertiser control as one of four "filters" through which news must pass prior to publication. All these areas and more that are of concern to political economists, are obscured by focusing merely on "uses and gratifications" of audiences, and by implication on the "sovereignty" of media "consumers." [8]

Likewise, "attaining a sense of personal identity," another "use and gratification," is loaded with unacknowledged political-economic import. It is surely a goal of much advertising to set forth models of comportment; when audiences seek out and find role models in the media, they become complicit to their own political-economic control—the very definition of hegemony. Critical researchers, George Gerbner and associates, in responding with "cultivation research," demonstrated "how exposure to the world of television contributes to viewers' conceptions about the real world" (Shanahan and Morgan 1999:7). For Gerbner, cultivation was all about social control by elites to benefit elites. Cultivation studies constituted, in essence, empirical analyses of the successes/limitations of Lippmann-styled pseudoenvironments. Gerbner's major finding was that heavy users of the medium are more likely to accept as real television's depiction of social life than are light users.

From a "uses and gratifications" perspective, audiences also use media to provide bases for conversation and social interaction, or use media as a substitute for real-life interactions (Chandler 1994). From a political economy perspective, however, as Walter Lippmann emphasized, it is very much in the interest of elites that the general public interpret the social, political, and economic environment in ways conducive to preserving and extending elite authority, and one marvelous way of instituting this form of social control is by providing topics for daily conversation (an O.J. Simpson or Michael Jackson trial, say, or continually fretting over "weapons of mass destruction"). Even better, however, is if audiences forego conversations altogether, and rely instead on media "friends" for their "socializing." Near the end of his life, war time propagandist John Grierson (1979) reflected on the immense propaganda potential of television, coupling as it does the audience's desire to be "cozy" with immense powers of suggestion: "Where

more notably than in the home does the power of suggestion operate?" Grierson asked (pp. 210-19).

Active audiences. Although "uses and gratifications" peaked by the 1980s, it may be thought of as constituting but one stream of a much broader and still contemporary antipolitical economy doctrine, namely the "active audiences." In the opening chapter of the revised edition of The Process and Effects of Mass Communication, Schramm (1971) immodestly claimed that he had been first, way back in 1952, to suggest that audiences are "highly active, highly selective …, manipulating rather than being manipulated by a message —a full partner in the communication process." Schramm added that his original article, "How Communication Works," was intended to be "a reaction against … the irrational fears of propaganda being expressed in the early 1950s." He continued:

> The unsophisticated viewpoint was that if a person could be reached by the insidious forces of propaganda carried by the mighty power of the mass media, he could be changed and converted and controlled. So propaganda became a hate word, the media came to be regarded fearfully, and laws were passed and actions taken to protect "defenseless people" against "irresistible communication" (Schramm 1971:8). [9]

Schramm is as much as admitting that his research program was designed to neutralize or abolish the political economy of media.

The doctrine of active audiences expanded significantly over ensuing years—to such a point, indeed, that according to some contemporary proponents everyone is capable of construing his or her own meanings from media texts (Fish 1980; Easthope 1991:47-51). Media presentations for active audience theorists are likened to Rorschach tests. As Paul Cobley (1996) summarizes:

> The crux of the issue is whether there are as many possible readings of a text as there are readers, or whether there may be a small number of 'correct' or 'legitimate' readings of a text (or even just one 'correct' reading). ... For [Stanley] Fish, the reader supplies everything; this is because there can be nothing that precedes interpretation. As soon as human beings apprehend an item in the world they have already embarked on a process of interpreting it. There can be no 'given' as such (pp. 405-406).

Emphasizing active audiences, again, reduces the possibility of political economy for, as the Mattelarts ask, "What is the point in dwelling on unequal exchange of television programes and films on the international audiovisual market if the power of meaning lies in the hands of the consumer?" (Mattelart and Mattelart 1995:125).

Like "uses and gratifications," the doctrine of the "active audience," too, can be modified to become compatible with political economy, even though mainstream proponents failed to do this. In England, Stuart Hall, however, suggested that the "codes" readers bring to texts are as important as the texts themselves and that codes are class or subculturally based. Hall (1980) did not dispute that there is a dominant meaning (a "preferred reading") to texts; to the contrary, he maintained that meanings are to be struggled over and thereby he related codes or "readings" to political economy.

Media Transfer Model

In official policy circles, the United States for decades has championed international "free flow" of information, albeit a "free flow" encumbered by stringent copyright, and has justified that position with two principal contentions. First, it has claimed that "free flow" of information and individual liberty in accessing informational artifacts are the sine qua non of democracy and of individual liberty/human rights; emerging media, viewed from this perspective, are "technologies of freedom" (Pool 1990), certainly not instruments of oppression, domination, empire, and control. Second, in international fora, the United States claims that informational artifacts are, and should be recognized as being merely economic commodities, produced and consumed for no other purposes than to satisfy consumer wants ("consumer sovereignty") and to earn pecuniary rewards for rights' holders; hence, these artifacts are/should be subject to international trade rules as enforced by the World Trade Organization and other bi-lateral/multilateral trade arrangements, as opposed to policies of cultural organizations like UNESCO (Braman 1990).

It is evident that the "law of minimal effects" and the doctrine of "active audiences" (if devoid of political economy interpretations like those formulated by Stuart Hall), if accepted, could go a long way to counter international concerns over America's media dominance. Even more effective, though, would be a doctrine positively promoting global media expansion. Such was the political-economic import of the "media transfer model" as developed and promoted by luminaries bankrolled by the U.S. military and CIA [10] like Elihu Katz, Wilbur Schramm, Lucien

Pye, and Ithiel de Sola Pool. [11] MIT's de Sola Pool (1966), for example, insisted that "where radio goes, there modernization attitudes come" (pp. 106-110). Radio audiences in Third World countries, according to these theorists, after being continually exposed to western media, will wish to imitate modern (i.e., western) attitudes and behavior and to cast off obsolete indigenous customs that inhibit economic expansion. The loss of customs and traditions that this entails is much to be desired, in the view of these scholars. Alienation and dislocation, loss of referents, social and cultural upheaval, loss of sovereignty and extension of American influence were concomitants largely unmentioned by these media transfer theorists (Sussman and Lent 1991:5-6).

More recently, in a rare but deservedly renowned public utterance, State Department officials cast a rather different light on America's cultural exports and by implication on the media transfer model. Characterizing media exports as "soft power" (defined as "the ability to achieve desired outcomes in international affairs through attraction rather than coercion") Nye and Owens (1996) deemed soft power to be as important as armaments in America's quest for world domination, [12] perhaps explaining, too, why so much of the innovation in communication media over the past hundred years—radio transmissions, satellites, computers, the internet—is traceable to the U.S. military (Mattelart 1994).

Controversies surrounding "free flow" vs. "cultural imperialism" are, of course, decades' old (Nordenstreng and Schiller 1979; UNESCO 1980), even leading the United States and the United Kingdom to withdraw for a time from UNESCO (Preston, Herman and Schiller 1989) as they were losing the battle there, to fight their cause instead in international trade fora such as the World Trade Organization. This is not the place to recount those prolonged and bitter disputes, except to note that the disagreements persist to the present: Virtually unilaterally in October 2005 the United States argued and voted against UNESCO's Convention on Cultural Diversity (Choike 2005).

Cultural Studies/ Social Construction

From the beginning, through foundational texts by writers like E.P. Thompson, Raymond Williams, and Stuart Hall, political economy was a mainstay—even the driving force—of British cultural studies (Turner 1990:41-84; Sardar and Van Loon 1999:58). Likewise did foundational Canadian cultural/media theorists, beginning with Harold Innis who linked time/space bias of media with monopolies of knowledge, emphasize political-economic aspects of culture (Innis 1951, 1952; Babe 2000). However, as Sardar and Van Loon (1999) remark, "Questions of power and politics, class and intellectual formation, so fundamental to the British exponents of cultural studies, lost their significance in the United States" (p. 58).

Intellectual historian Richard E. Lee (2003) dates the inception of American cultural studies to a 1966 international conference at John Hopkins University entitled, "Criticism and the Sciences of Man/Les Langages Critiques et les Sciences de Homme" (p. 153). It was there that Paul de Man (1919 - 83), then newly arrived at Yale, met Jacques Derrida, and the Yale School of deconstruction was born. [13] Deconstruction, through de Man's influence became "profoundly conservative" (Lee:156). For de Man and the Yale poststructuralist movement, there were "no facts, only interpretations; no truths, only expedient fictions," and these axioms were applied not only to literature but to the human sciences (Lee:154). The impossibility of political economy, given such presuppositions, is readily apparent. We see here also a convergence between poststructuralist cultural studies and the doctrine of the active audience/active reader in media studies. These trends are discussed further in the next section.

Simultaneous with the John Hopkins conference, yet another scholarly discourse of relevance here was being inaugurated with publication of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's highly influential text, The Social Construction of Reality (1966). I take the Berger-Luckmann text as an instance also, in part, of symbolic interactionism, as developed by Herbert Blumer and others. A main difference between the "active audience" thesis discussed above and the Berger-Luckmann position, is methodological individualism versus methodological collectivism. For the former, individuals negotiate their meanings from stimuli provided by message senders; for the latter, meaning is a matter of social conditioning. With regard to obscuring political economy, however, these two mainstream models are cut from the same cloth.

"Common sense," or everyday reality, Berger and Luckmann (1966) wrote, seems (erroneously) to be objectively given (pp. 35-7). They added significantly: "While I am capable of engaging in doubt about its reality, I am obliged to suspend such doubts as I routinely exist in everyday life" (Berger and Luckmann:37). One of the factors making every day life seem to be given objectively is language. Language originates in and refers primarily to every day life and as a sign system it has the "quality of objectivity," or given-ness (Berger and Luckmann:53). They remark that language is in fact, however, a "repository of vast accumulations of meaning and experience, which it can then

preserve in time and transmit to following generations" (Berger and Luckmann:52); language in its seeming given-ness, they continue, has a "coercive effect," "forcing" people into its patterns (Berger and Luckmann:53). These are insightful statements, possessing much potential in terms of political economy. The idea that members of a society or community are influenced, largely unconsciously, by the "biases" of the language system they are born into is a far cry, it may be noted, from the autonomy proposed by the "active reader" thesis. One wishes that Berger and Luckmann had gone on to explore manifestations of the control or influence different groups exercise through their control of or influence over language; unfortunately, that door they failed to budge.

They continued that language is not only a sign system that re-presents objects of everyday life, it is also a symbol system that transcends everyday existence: "Language constructs immense edifices of symbolic representation that appear to tower over the reality of everyday life like gigantic presences from another world. Religion, philosophy, art, and science are the historically most important symbol systems of this kind" (Berger and Luckmann 1966:55). Here again is presented a gaping entrance to political economy, but Berger and Luckmann (1966) pass by hurriedly, choosing rather to personify language and to use the passive tense, thereby de-politicizing their thesis, as in the following extract:

> Language builds up semantic fields or zones of meaning that are linguistically circumscribed. Vocabulary, grammar and syntax are geared to the organization of these semantic fields. Thus language builds up classification schemes to differentiate objects by 'gender' (a quite different matter from sex, of course) or by number; forms to make statements of action as against statements of being; modes of indicating degrees of social intimacy, and so on (p. 55).

Also giving an illusion of given-ness to everyday life, according to Berger and Luckmann (1966), are institutions: "The institutional world," they write, "is experienced as an objective reality. It has a history that antedates the individual's birth and is not accessible to his biographical recollection" (p. 77). Unfortunately Berger and Luckmann refrained from concrete, historical analyses of the rise of institutions, declaring rather that institutions arise out of the "reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by types of actors" (Berger and Luckmann:72). Indeed, they proposed a Robinson Crusoe situation, comprised of A and B:

> As A and B interact, in whatever manner, typifications will be produced quite quickly. A watches B perform. He attributes motives to B's actions and, seeing the actions recur, typifies the motives as recurrent. As B goes on performing, A is soon able to say to himself, 'Aha, there he goes again.' At the same time A may assume that B is doing the same thing with regard to him. From the beginning, both A and B assume this reciprocity of typification (Berger and Luckmann:74).

It would, in brief, be difficult to conceive of a more power-neutered account of the rise of institutions and cultural practices than this.

To summarize, Berger and Luckmann created openings through which political-economic understanding could have infused American communication and cultural studies, but they papered over these openings, obscuring them for many readers. Moreover, in proposing that reality is and can be nothing but a "social construction," they denied solid ground from which to critique common or popular understanding, and thereby undermined the ontological premise of critical theory. [14] Whereas Lippmann insisted that there is a material reality, understandable in their narrow fields by experts, Berger and Luckmann proposed that this is not so. In effect, they avoided a criticism concerning elite dishonesty that could (and should) be leveled at Lippmann who had urged elites to construct pseudoenvironments to gain popular acceptance for their policies. For Berger/Luckmann, "pseudoenvironment" has no meaning as "reality" is merely a social construction in any event. Conservative postmodernist/poststructuralist theorists like Paul de Man, Stanley Fish and Jean Baudrillard, I will argue below, implicitly took Berger-Luckmann to the next step—the denial even of socially constructed reality.

To summarize, although there were remarkable changes in the modes of communicating from the early 1900s to, say, the 1980s, accompanied by equally momentous changes in media theorizing by mainstream American scholars defined here as writers most frequently cited in histories of media/communication thought, there was at least one notable constancy: the avoidance of political economy. To avoid political economy in media scholarship is to draw attention away from disparities in communicatory power and from uses to which that power is put. Some of the theorists reviewed here may honestly have believed that these issues are insignificant; others may, perhaps, more consciously have played into the hands of powerful message senders. Irrespective of motivation, the consequence in each case has been the same: mainstream American media scholarship, by and large through neglect or inattention, "justified" gross disparities in communicatory power. The next section carries the story into the present, the era of

fast capitalism and the accompanying postmodernist discourses.

Digitalized Media and the Age of Fast Capitalism

Digitization and the Information Society

According to many commentators, computer communications has created a brand new era, one that is as distinct from the age of broadcasting as that was from the age of print. Information Society, Information Economy, Postindustrial Society, Third Wave, Network Society are but some of the terms still circulating to distinguish the present era of "fast capitalism" from what existed before.

Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver were among the early theorists of digital communication. In 1949, within Bell Labs and for the U.S. military, they devised the "mathematical theory of communication." They denoted the "quantity" of information as the number of binary digits (on-off pulses or "bits") needed to specify any given selection from a preset field of possibilities (Shannon and Weaver 1949). The digitization of communication as we understand the term today, however, certainly surpasses Shannon and Weaver's modest expectations. Any and all information that could previously be transmitted electronically (text, image, sound, moving picture) can now be transformed for purposes of transmission into binary sequences.

Katherine Hayles (1999) attributes to Shannon and Weaver the conceptualization, common today, of information "as an entity distinct from the substrates [or media] carrying it" (p. xi). Hayles proposed that from Shannon and Weaver's formulation, it "was a small step to think of information as a kind of bodiless fluid that could flow between different substrates without loss of meaning or form." This is because any sequence of 1s and 0s, or on-off pulses, can be replicated so easily that the substrate or carrier seems to lose significance in comparison to the sequence itself.

At the very time Shannon and Weaver were theorizing digitization, other scholars were indeed "de-materializing" information along the lines suggested by Hayles. In The Human Use of Human Beings (1950), for instance, cyberneticist Norbert Wiener (1894 - 1964), a former professor of Claude Shannon, maintained that organisms can be viewed metaphorically as messages and as patterns,which is to say as recurring forms; only secondarily are they material. In an elegant, almost rhapsodic passage, Wiener (1950) described how much more important, or at least fundamental, pattern is compared to matter:

> Life is an island here and now in a dying world. The process by which we living beings resist the general stream of corruption and decay is known as homeostasis. ... It is the pattern maintained by this homeostasis which is the touchstone of our personal identity. Our tissues change as we live: the food we eat and the air we breathe become flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone, and the momentary elements of our flesh and bone pass out of our body every day with our excreta. We are but whirlpools in a river of ever-flowing water. We are not stuff that abides, but patterns that perpetuate themselves (p. 130).

What Wiener downplayed, of course, was not only the material constituting the forms, but also the matter-energy foundation that gives rise to the possibility of homeostasis.

Economist Kenneth Boulding, a contemporary of Wiener, went even further. He minimized the material aspect of information to such an extent that he claimed "information" defies the laws of physics, specifically the first and second laws of thermodynamics. Regarding the first law, the law of conservation, he maintained that information/knowledge alone is what can really increase, making it "primal" to evolutionary processes:

> The through-put of information in an organization involves a "teaching" or structuring process which does not follow any strict law of conservation even though there may be limitations imposed upon it. When a teacher instructs a class, at the end of the hour presumably the students know more and the teacher does not know any less. In this sense the teaching process is utterly unlike the process of exchange which is the basis of the law of conservation. In exchange, what one gives up another acquires; what one gains another loses. In teaching this is not so. What the student gains the teacher does not lose. Indeed, in the teaching process, as every teacher knows, the teacher gains as well as the student. In this phenomenon we find the key to the mystery of life (Boulding 1956:35).

And again, the same thought, expressed twenty years later:

> Knowledge ... is the field within which evolution takes place. It is the only thing that can really change, the only thing that is not conserved (Boulding 1978:224).

A further implication of the purported capacity of information/knowledge to defy or transcend the law of conservation (if true), is the inapplicability of the law of entropy. In fact, Boulding saw information as a force countering entropy.

Another eminent scholar who celebrated the purported immateriality of information was Ithiel de Sola Pool. In his last major text, Pool (1990) declared:

> In a world of scarce resources, thought is pleasingly abundant; like air, it is a free good. ... Communication, in short, is one of the good things in life that can be had without straining the world's scarce resources. In communication we are very far from the limits of growth (p. 220).

Likewise John Perry Barlow (1996), in an influential essay, proposed that internet "space" is fundamentally unlike the material territories governed by nation states, writing:

> Cyberspace consists of transactions, relationships, and thought itself, arrayed like a standing wave in the web of our communications. Ours is a world that is both everywhere and nowhere, but it is not where bodies live. We are creating a world that all may enter without privilege or prejudice accorded by race, economic power, military force, or station of birth. We are creating a world whereanyone, anywhere may express his or her beliefs, no matter how singular, without fear of being coerced into silence or conformity.

These are but a few of many possible citations. For the present discussion, their importance lies in the support they lend to the (often implicit) premise of some postmodernist/poststructuralist theorists regarding the immateriality of information/knowledge, a view that has gathered momentum in recent decades.

In some ways the "dematerialization" of information dates back also to the semiotics of Ferdinand de Saussure at the turn of the last century. De Saussure declared that all "signs" (or in our terms, "information") consist of two elements, the signifier, the physical presence of the sign, and the signified, the mental image summoned by the signifier for the person perceiving it. De Saussure, a linguist, maintained that signifieds are contingent largely on the structure of language, and very loosely if at all on the objects in the external world to which signs ostensibly point. In other words, the materiality in de Saussure's system consisted mainly of the physical presence of signs, not the external worlds to which they ostensibly refer; it is that minimal material grounding that writers like Wiener further trivialize. It is with this background that we come to recognize what I would term the dialectic of postmodernist discourses.

The Complexity of Postmodernism

Arguably postmodernist thought is the emerging ontology of our era of fast capitalism. Without question, fast capitalism depends on digitization of information flows, and equally unquestionably digitization is the technology that best suits postmodernist thinking, since so much can be done through computers to alter representations and create simulacra.

In his review of postmodernist thought, Frank Webster detected several key features. Of greatest significance, however, he declared, is an insistence that we live in a world of signs. "Symbols and images," he continued, for many postmodernists "are the only 'reality' that we have; we do not, in other words, see reality through language; rather language is the reality that we see" (Webster 1995:175). Or, as Frederic Jameson (1991) put it:

> Postmodernism is what you have when the modernization process is complete and nature is gone for good. It is a more fully human world than the older one, but one in which "culture" has become a veritable second nature" (p. ix).

By emphasizing culture and language as makers of "reality," or as the unavoidable lens through which the outside world is interpreted, postmodernists challenged the objectivity of the "truths" proposed by Enlightenment rationality. Their discourses arose, however, not merely in response to recognition of the problematic nature of language with regard to mapping external reality (de Saussure's point), nor simply to account for ongoing changes in social organization as induced by changes in media of communication ("the mode of information") (Poster 1990), but also, often, out of deep-seated dissatisfactions with what went before, namely Enlightenment thinking and harmful consequences stemming from that: weaponry, class injustices, individualism, utilitarianism and the concomitant breakdown of community, environmental despoliation, and so on. Of course long before postmodernist writers came on the scene, the Enlightenment project of knowledge for power had critics: Marx criticized the injustices of Baconian instrumentalism and rationality, Durkheim the anomie, and Thoreau the environmental degradation. In a sense, however, postmodernist thought is, or can be, even more fundamental and far-reaching in its critique than what was launched by those writers. For what postmodernist thought does, in part, is to challenge Baconian rationality and empiricism at the core. This critique, already implicit in the linguistics of de Saussure, has been ramped up several

levels with electronic communication generally, and digitization in particular. According to Poster (1994),

> Language no longer represents a reality, no longer is a neutral tool to enhance the subject's instrumental rationality: language becomes or better reconfigures reality. ... Electronic communication systematically removes the fixed points, the grounds, the foundations that were essential to modern theory (p. 176).

What this means, in terms of political economy, is that all of the events presumed by Enlightenment thinkers to be attributable to "nature," or to "external conditions" (think of gender and sexuality, for example, or of race and ethnicity, or of Malthus, Herbert Spencer and Darwin), are "really" a consequence of culture and language. It is the culture, and the biases of language that are the culprits, not some external "law" of nature termed the "Principle of Natural Selection," "The Survival of the Fittest, "The Principle of Population," or marketplace quests for "efficiency" (Babe 1995). It is hard to envisage a more fundamental critique of the existing order. It was also Macpherson's point, however, as elaborated above and at length in this paper, that mainstream thought tends very much to support or justify established power. It would then follow that as postmodernist/poststructuralist thinking moves increasingly into the mainstream, one can anticipate it losing its critical edge and becoming a paradigm that "justifies" fast capitalism. Indeed, I would argue, trends toward the domestication of postmodernist thought are not only evident, but are inherent to the enterprise itself.

The Dialectic of Postmodernism

On the one hand, postmodernist discourses undermine the Enlightenment project, perhaps more thoroughly than any other critique yet launched. If "reality" is merely a product of language, whose signs are ever shifting in meanings as new digitized forms continually refer sequentially to one another with little correspondence to the "real world," then the categories "realists" have taken for granted—capital and labor, progress, gender, ethnicity, intelligence, rationality, sanity, and on and on—categories that in their seeming "givenness" have often "justified" outcomes like those bemoaned by writers like Marx, Durkheim and Thoreau—are now seen as mere linguistic constructions, with no authenticity outside of language, which is itself an artifact not unrelated to the distribution of power. By this understanding of postmodernist discourses, there is a ready alignment with political economy as language and culture become sites of struggle.

On the other hand, the seeds of the destruction of postmodernists' radical bent are readily evident. First, if "reality" is indeed merely a fabrication of language, then one might conclude that the concerns, as raised by Marx, Durkheim, Thoreau and their successors are likewise mere linguistic fabrications, mere "phantasmagoria," bearing no necessary relation to material existence. Indeed, the very criteria whereby social arrangements are to be judged (equity, human dignity, environmental health, peace), become mere linguistic constructs. As Frank Webster (1995) remarks, "Postmodernists' emphasis on differences—in interpretation, in values—is in close accord with the abandonment of belief in the authentic" (p. 173). Quoting Michel Foucault, he adds, "Postmodernists believe that 'each society has its regime of truth, its general politics of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true.' In such circumstances postmodern thinkers perceive themselves to be throwing off the straitjacket of Enlightenment searches for 'truth', emphasizing instead the liberating implications of differences of analysis, explanation and interpretation" (Webster:167-8). But, it is hard to do political economy if one is not merely pointing to, but is actually celebrating differences in analysis, in explanation, and in interpretation. Indeed, from this postmodernist perspective, political economy is but one more of the "grand narratives" to be dismissed.

Second, postmodernist thought, if bereft of political economy considerations regarding power centers structuring language, controlling messages, and censoring messages, in effect takes the position that "pseudoenvironments" (or, in Jean Baudrillard's term, "simulacra") are all there is and all there can be. Lippmann, one senses, would have been delighted. The PR agencies and other spinners and fabricators are now absolved from not only of the intent to deceive, but from deception as well.

This "dialectic of postmodernist thought" is well illustrated by comparing the early and late writings of Baudrillard (1929 - present). According to Poster (2001), Baudrillard initially set out to "extend the Marxist critique of capitalism to areas that were beyond the scope of the theory of the mode of production;" later, he abandoned Marxism, however, to take up a "semiological model [as a way to] decipher the meaning structure of the modern commodity" (p.1). Ensuing from this transition, Poster (2001) advises, Baudrillard developed the notion of "'hyperreality' [as] the new linguistic condition of society, rendering impotent theories that still rely on materialist reductionism or rationalist referentiality" (p. 2). In brief, Baudrillard was initially a materialist grounded in the Marxist tradition, albeit one endeavoring to extend that tradition to encompass the consumer society, and ended up as a postmodernist for

whom materialist explanations were "impotent." Let us, therefore, look more closely at these "two Baudrillards."

In "The System of Objects," Baudrillard insisted on maintaining a constant awareness of the materiality within which signs circulate. He did this in two ways. First, he related advertiser- induced meanings for products to social standing and power relations and maintained that this was the distinguishing feature of our consumer society compared to all others: "Undoubtedly, objects have always constituted a system of recognition," he wrote, "but in conjunction with, and often in addition to, other systems (gesture, ritual, ceremonial, language, birth status, code of moral values, etc.). What is specific to our society is that other systems of recognition are progressively withdrawing, primarily to the advantage of the 'code of social standing'" (Baudrillard 2001:22). Indeed, he goes further: "Consumption is not a passive mode of assimilation and appropriation. … Consumption is an active mode of relations (not only to objects, but to the collectivity and to the world), a systematic mode of activity and a global response on which our whole cultural system is founded" (Baudrillard 2001:24).

Second, he proclaimed, behind this "code of social standing" as manifested by owned and displayed commodities, lies "illegible" but nonetheless "real structures of production and social relations" (Baudrillard 2001:24). We may think we understand social relations by "reading" commodities, but that, he implied, masks the real relations of production and of social existence. For example, designer footwear may indicate wealth and create status for the wearer, but invisible are the Third World factories and the near-slave labor used in their manufacture, and as well the terms of trade that exist between the rich North and the "developing" South. Baudrillard (2001) added, "If the code's coherence provides a formal sense of security, that is also the best means for it to extend its immanent and permanent jurisdiction over all individuals in society" (p. 23).

Likewise, in "Consumer Society," he declared that while commodities appear to be self-generating—"a proliferating vegetation"—one must always remember that "they are in actuality the products of human activity, and are controlled, not by natural ecological laws, but by the law of exchange value" (Baudrillard 2001:33). The early Baudrillard, then, although postmodernist due to his emphasis on the centrality of signs and language, was not at risk of perhaps inadvertently supporting inequalities in the distribution of power, because he always bore in mind "the political economy of the sign" (Baudrillard 2001:60-100).

Baudrillard's materialist grounding disappeared, of course, in his perhaps most famous work, Simulations, and with it vanished political economy and the possibility of the critique of power. There Baudrillard maintained that in a world of circulating signs our condition is more one of simulation than it is of representation, which is to say signs point to one another and not some material reality beyond themselves. In Simulations he declared that "Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, when in fact all of Los Angeles and the America surrounding it are no longer real, but of the order of the hyperreal and of simulation"(Baudrillard 1983:25). [15]

When the real and the fictitious, the objective and subjective, become merely "entangled orders of simulation … a play of illusions and phantasms" (Baudrillard 1983:23), there is little possibility for political economy. Baudrillard (1983) himself recognized this, writing: "Power, too, for some time now produces nothing but signs of its resemblance … Power is no longer present except to conceal that there is none" (pp. 45, 46). He continues:

> Is any given bombing in Italy the work of leftist extremists, or of extreme right-wing provocation, or staged by centrists to bring terror into disrepute and to shore up its own failing power, or again is it a police-inspired scenario in order to appeal to public security? All this is equally true, and the search for proof, indeed the objectivity of the fact does not check this vertigo of interpretation. We are in a logic of simulation which has nothing to do with a logic of facts and an order of reasons. (Baudrillard 1983:31).

If the reality principle is in its death throes, and the "vertigo of interpretations" now dwarfs facts, how can one possibly pursue justice? It would make much more sense simply to luxuriate in the consumer society and forge whimsical interpretations of media-concocted phantasms—according to Frank Webster (1995) a common postmodernist recommendation (pp. 167-8).

On the other hand, James Compton (2004) insists and as the early Baudrillard (among others) showed, it is possible to write postmodernist analyses emphasizing the centrality of the sign from a materialist ground, thereby maintaining the possibility of political economy. I would argue that, in our globalizing era of augmenting gaps between rich and poor, environmental degradation and accelerating species extinctions, declarations of war under the cover of carefully contrived pseudoenvironments or simulacra, maintaining a material grounding to all our discourses is more important than ever.

Baudrillard's notion of the simulacra is Walter Lippmann's dream come true. For if non materialist postmodernists,

such as Baudrillard, can convince the general public that simulacra is all there is, all they can experience, then Lippmann's elites will have even fuller reign. In the end, whatever he himself may think about his own purportedly "critical" stance, Baudrillard plays into the hands of authoritarianism.

In this brief overview of aspects of intellectual history we have discovered several seeming ironies or paradoxes: mainstream U.S. communication studies was born out of CIA and military funding, but issues of communicatory power (political economy) were continuously ignored in the mainstream literature; eminent media scholars engaging in psychological warfare and media propaganda avowed allegiance to a "law of minimal effects"; America's most distinguished journalist self-avowedly attempted to save democracy by counseling elites to manufacture pseudoenvironments; authors proclaimed in their books that authors provide little more than Rorschach tests for their readers. In such a bizarre context, is it so hard to accept that Baudrillard, ostensibly positioning himself as an egalitarian striking out at authority, in fact reduces the accountability with which power is wielded? Or that in being supercritical, he effaces the possibility of critical thought?

Endnotes

1. Many thanks to Ben Agger, Edward Comor and James Compton for helpful comments on a previous draft.

2. It has been suggested that Jacques Derrida, for instance, established deconstruction of texts as a means of opening texts up to new understandings, not just dominant interpretations. See O'Donnell 2003: 56.

3. Regarding the United States the Trilateral report declared: "Some of the problems of governance in the United states today stem from an excess of democracy ... Needed ... is a greater degree of moderation in democracy. In practice , this moderation has two major areas of application. First, democracy is only one way of constituting authority, and it is not necessarily a universally applicable one. In many situations the claims of expertise, seniority, experience, and special talents may override the claims of democracy as a way of constituting authority. ... Second, the effective operation of a democratic political system usually requires some measure of apathy and noninvolvement on the part of individuals and groups. In the past, every democratic society has had a marginal population, of greater or lesser size, which has not actively participated in politics. In itself, this marginality on the part of some groups is inherently undemocratic, but it has also been one of the factors which has enabled democracy to function effectively. Marginal social groups, as in the case of the blacks, are now becoming full participants in the political system. Yet the danger of overloading the political system with demands which extend its functions and undermine its authority remains." (pp. 113 - 14).

4. According to The Globe and Mail, "The Department of Homeland Security, along with the Patriot Act, has effectively suspended the rule of law in the United States—citizens can now be searched or arrested without a warrant, imprisoned without trial, tried by secret military tribunal, tortured or executed in secrecy. Their phones can be tapped, mail read, Internet monitored, and what they read at or borrow from the library can be analyzed for signs of deviancy. The guarantees of personal liberty in the Constitution have been trampled over. Between 30,000 and 40,000 people have been detained or harassed under the Patriot act, and precious few charges involving actual terrorism have been laid as a result." Paul William Roberts, "The Flagging Empire," The Globe and Mail, 10 September 2005, pp. F1 - F5.

5. The term, "critical," was actually coined in 1937 by Max Horkheimer in an article entitled, "Traditionelle und Kritische Theorie;" see Rogers 1994: 110.

6. Spectrum management for Smythe was "no sterile, neutral process." "It is," he insisted, "political in every sense of the word. ... The radio spectrum is to telecommunications as is water to fish, soil to plants." (Smythe 1985: 439).

7. "Uses and gratifications" had actually constituted a portion of Lazarsfeld's audience research; this was intended to aid media in gaining audiences.

8. The ideology of "consumer sovereignty" is a direct link to another depoliticized mainstream discourse, namely neoclassical economics. Unfortunately further elaborating the similarities between these mainline disciplines, while of interest and importance, is beyond the scope of this paper. See, however, Babe 1995 and Babe 2006.

9. Schramm's original 1954 edition of The Process and Effects of Mass Communication, of which "How Communication Works" is the opening chapter, "originated in the United States Information Agency's (USIA) need for a book of background materials which could be used in training some of the agency's new employees in the field of research and evaluation." See Schramm 1954. "Foreword," The Process and Effects of Mass Communication, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1954.

10. Ithiel de Sola Pool, Daniel Lerner and Wilbur Schramm, all exponents of the "media transfer model," for decades undertook research work and publication for the CIA through the CIA-funded Center for

International Studies at MIT. Wilbur Schramm, by Everett Rogers's account "the" founder of US media/communication studies, was also a part-time CIA campus informant; according to political economist Dallas Smythe, Schramm filed regular surreptitious reports on Smythe's activities at the University of Illinois during the 1950s and 1960s. See Smythe, as cited in Babe (2000: 115). Among Schramm's publications was the co-authored book, The Reds Take A City (Rutgers University Press, 1951); material in his seminal, The Process and Effects of Mass Communication (1954), was prepared initially, according to Simpson "as training materials for U.S. government propagandas programs" (Simpson: 108).

11. Lerner, for example, was a towering figure behind the media as development paradigm; by allowing modern media and their consumerist messages into "developing countries," he alleged, modernization would occur rapidly through the demonstration effect and the desire to emulate the west (Lerner: 1958). These thoughts were taken up by, among others, Schramm, Rogers, and de Sola Pool. Even into the 1990s de Sola Pool was posthumously championing "free flow" for giving (international) audiences what they want (Pool 1990).

12. They write, for example: "Knowledge, more than ever is power. The one country that can best lead the information revolution will be more powerful than any other. For the foreseeable future, that country is the United States. America has apparent strength in military power and economic production. Yet its more subtle comparative advantage is its ability to collect, process, act upon, and disseminate information, an edge that will almost certainly grow over the next decade. This advantage stems from Cold war investments and America's open society, thanks to which it dominates important communications and information processing technologies--space-based surveillance, direct broadcasting, high-speed computers--and has an unparalleled ability to integrate complex information systems." (Nye and Owens: 20).

13. Other prominent members of the Yale School of deconstruction included Harold Bloom, Geoffrey Hartman and J. Hills Miller.

14. According to Lazarsfeld, "critical research ... seems to imply ideas of basic human values according to which all actual or desired effects should be appraised." (Lazarsfeld 1972: 160.

15. Earlier he defined the hyperreal as "the generation by models of a real without origin or reality" (p. 2).

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The Power Elite at 50: C. Wrights Mills' Political Sociology in Midlife Crisis

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In 2000, Oxford University Press gave C. Wright Mills' classic statement in political sociology, The Power Elite (1956), a face-lift. Gone from its cover were the somber black-&-white colors and clichéd Davy Crocket-like floating hats of yesteryear. The New Edition's fresh look is given by a cover wallpapered with photographs of The White House, Pentagon, and Wall Street, the hyper-ascendancy and anti-democratic integration of each sphere of national power therein symbolized described by Mills fifty years ago as having formed an emergent mid-century institution, a now-hidden, now-visible, American power elite. In a Wobbly lexicon that would become characteristically his own, Mills not only described a sociology of power in an increasingly bureaucratized United States, he also proceeded to identify the baleful, sobering consequences of this development, including particularly a world-historical irrationality of bureaucratic rationality that he believed stood back of the rapid, unchecked movement of the United States—together with its partner in nuclear brinkmanship, the Soviet Union—toward a perverse socio-political convergence and, quite possibly, finally, to each another's mutually assured destruction. The sympathetic reader might simply note that, in 1956, it was understandably difficult for the then-forty year-old Mills to see through the shadows cast back and forth between Max Weber and the coming Cuban Missile Crisis.

Or, one could go farther. In his 7 December 2005 Noble Lecture, British playwright Harold Pinter argues that, unlike the crimes of the Soviet Union, the postwar crimes of the United States "have only been superficially recorded, let alone documented, let alone acknowledged, let alone recognized as crimes at all." Mr. Pinter is outraged and apoplectic since, as he sees things, "the crimes of the United States have been systematic, constant, vicious, remorseless, but very few people have actually talked about them" (Pinter 2005). While Pinter never, of course, makes mention of C. Wright Mills, his characterization of the United States as every bit as undemocratic and menacing as the former Soviet Union is a bold statement perfectly consequent with both the spirit and the letter of Mills' now-fifty year-old political sociology. Since there is scarcely a prominent sociologist—nay, a leading social scientist of any stripe—who embodies these Millsian qualities, let the 75 year-old Harold Pinter stand-in for what C. Wright Mills might sound like were Mills celebrating his 90th birthday in August of 2006.

Perhaps not surprisingly, one does not find an updating of the sort called for by Pinter between the covers of Oxford's New Edition. Rather, the book's truly significant new addition is an Afterword by Alan Wolfe, most certainly among sociology's leading contemporary practitioners but also no particular fan of C. Wright Mills. Trained originally in political science and perhaps invited to provide his assessment partly for that reason, Wolfe's Afterword is aimed, as he writes, primarily at "[s]orting out what is helpful in Mills' book from what has become obsolete…" (2000: 366). It should be emphasized that Wolfe's reading of the book is not without appreciation for Mills' sociology, nor is his aim to discourage contemporary re-readings and continued critical appraisal of the work. Yet, it is too much to regard his as a sympathetic critique. As discussed at greater length below, Wolfe wishes to bisect Mills' descriptive sociology, which he regards as in some important respects skillfully elucidating the period with respect to which The Power Elite was written, from Mills' social criticism and proscriptions for political change, which Wolfe rejects as generally misguided and often mean-spirited, whether with respect to the situation fifty years ago or presently. [1]

For Wolfe, the world has changed. Capitalism that today operates on a global scale needs less its alliances with merely national elites, and long before the U.S. military lost its especially useful Cold War raison d'etre, its decline

as a center of power was most prominently evident in its decreasing share of the national economic pie. Playing on the divergences between the Clinton and George W. Bush Administrations, Wolfe (himself a veteran of political involvement in the higher circles of the Democratic Party), also argues that the electoral politics that Mills imagined as a sideshow have in fact increased, not decreased, in political importance since Mills wrote in the mid-1950's. Given that he regards Mills' descriptive sociology of the period as the only aspect of the book meriting continued respect—and this, only if gutted of its reliance on a theory of "mass society," which is central to Mills' argument but anathema to Wolfe—it is not surprising that Wolfe ultimately concludes that The Power Elite at fifty is effectively over-the-hill.

So, which is it? Has The Power Elite so aged that it is safe for use even in undergraduate courses as an example of a sociologically and politically "extreme" political sociology? Is it little more than a "classic," perhaps worth re-reading if for no other reason than to pay heed to how mistaken a once-promising sociologist can be when, ignoring liberal-democratic American freedoms and the agency wielded even by everyday people (what Mills' ridicules as "The Great American Public"), theoretical arrogance led him to issue yet another failed attempts to predict the future? (1959: 298). Or, is The Power Elite at fifty a work as rarely understood as the "crimes of the United States," a prescient analysis that marks a breaking point in Mills' sociological oeuvre that divides his prior work from The Causes of World War Three (1958), Listen, Yankee! and a "Letter to the New Left" (1960a), and The Marxists (1962), that captures the significance of the political drama from Khrushchev's performance in the 20th Party Congress in 1956 to Dwight D. Eisenhower's Farewell Address to the Nation in 1961, that anticipates the onset of a long and as yet ending era of off-the-shelf politico-military criminal behavior (often termed "scandal"), from The Bay of Pigs, Dallas, the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, and on to the election of 1968, the general conduct of the Nixon Administrations and, of course, Watergate in particular, the election of 1980, the conduct of the Reagan Administrations and the Iran-Contra Affair in particular, the first Bush Administration and the war in Panama as well as the dubious entry of the United States into the first Gulf War in particular, the election of 2000, the response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and the instigation of the military occupation of Afghanistan and a second Gulf War leading to the occupation of Iraq; all this as well as what is very probably not known about each and the events, one may reasonably presume, that exist in the in-between spaces of this fast-paced timeline? Does The Power Elite explain the very origin of these many postwar criminal acts and as yet verified criminal acts that Mr. Pinter believes have been wrought against numerous peoples (millions dead in Southeast Asia alone, among them), by the United States of America?

Since Wolfe's sympathetic unsympathetic assessment has the advantage not only of appearing perfectly reasonable but also of traveling with The Power Elite where ever it goes, this essay stresses a sympathetic, but also, as with Pinter's hypothesis, a stark-eyed and seemingly outlandish appraisal of the work. The Power Elite may be fifty, well-known and seemingly exhausted, but it bears to keep in mind that George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four, its especially famed cousin across the pond, is an even more advanced 58 and arguably just as obscure as I suggest The Power Elite is from the point of view of today's dominant ideology.

I. Last in a Trilogy or First Step into the Fire?

Traditional interpretation locates The Power Elite as the third in a trilogy on the mid-century structure of power in the United States and in advanced industrial society generally. The best and most obvious reason for so doing is that Mills himself described the book this way. In a 1951 letter to Philip Vaudrin, editor at Knopf, Mills writes the following postscript:

> P.S. Just made a decision the other day. After I finish Character and Social Structure, which Gerth and I have been on since God knows when (Weber, I guess) Harcourt has it; and [after I finish] the Metropolitan Weekend (no contract), I am going to do a book called The Rich or The Upper Class or something like that. This will complete my trilogy: The New Men of Power (lower classes), White Collar (middle class), then upper stuff... (Mills and Mills 2000, editorial addition in original: 155).

Thus, there is nothing evidently askew with Mills' putative biographer, Irving Louis Horowitz, discussing The Power Elite under the title of "Trinity of Power" (1983: 256-281). First discussed privately in 1951, Mills notes in The Power Elite's acknowledgements that "[a] first draft of the materials was completed while in residence as a visitor at Brandeis University during the spring of 1953…" (1956: 383). A long time in coming and rooted primarily in Weber:

that is the usual shorthand context given for interpreting the significance of Mills' most famous book.

There is no question that Mills' sociology and his self-understanding as a sociologist were in this period both greatly influenced by the looming figure of Max Weber. As Mills notes even in the passage just quoted, at the time he first began to plan The Power Elite he had been working with Hans Gerth on Weber "since god knows when," which is to say, since roughly 1939, when Mills arrived at the University of Wisconsin to pursue doctoral work in sociology and soon thereafter began a productive if also notorious collaboration with Gerth, the brilliant German émigré widely acknowledged for his considerable knowledge of Weber as well as, even more impressively, that to which Weber addressed himself (see Oakes and Vidich 1999). Indeed, the analysis in The Power Elite most certainly owes more to Weber than any other social thinker, for Mills' study of the "command posts" of power stands or falls with a Weberian understanding of modern bureaucratization. This is the case even though, ironically, Weber's name never appears in the text and even though Weber's monumental oeuvre is cited only once, this, tangentially and via reference to From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology (1946), translated and edited by Gerth and Mills.

But it is not the presence or absence of Weber's acknowledged or unacknowledged influence that is presently at issue. Mills had already, in White Collar, for example, explicitly acknowledged Weber's paramount, and Marx's near-equal, importance for Mills' own "general perspective" (1951: 357). Rather, the more pointed question concerns of which aspect of Weber's multifaceted sociology predominates in the text, and of the increasing relative influence of Marx, various Marxian theorists, and Frankfurt School theorists in particular, evident in its pages. For in The Power Elite, we see Mills doing something much more than merely rounding-out his trilogy on power with a value-neutral analysis of increasingly hierarchal bureaucratic organizations that concentrate and integrate power at their apexes, something akin to an application of Roberto Michels' "iron law of oligarchy" to the mid-century American national political scene (see Michels 1996). [2] Instead, we see Mills much more closely following the example of the Max Weber who was riveted by immediate political concerns, often personally engaged in Weimar politics, and more than willing to issue damning judgments on the hypocrisy and irresponsibility of governing elites and the culture, or lack thereof, they countenanced, encouraged, and very often fed off. As Weber was to the Kaiser, so was Mills to Eisenhower and, later, Kennedy (see Diggins 1999).

But it goes beyond style and bravado. More than at any time prior in his career, The Power Elite finds Mills wedding historical and political concerns—a focus on the process of history-making generally and the prospects for democratic history-making and the making of modern democracy in particular—to structural analyses. This is where Wolfe especially wants off the Good Ship Mills. As noted above, for Wolfe, The Power Elite "is really two books," one that is sociological analysis written in a "somewhat clinical language" and "driven by data" and "extensive original research," the other written using a "language of outrage" in which Mills presents himself as though as a "biblical prophet" predicting "doom" and "harshly denouncing 'the second rate mind' and the 'ponderously spoken platitude'" (2000: 377-78). But this two-books reading begs the integrity of Mills' argument. What if Mills' structural analysis and his historicizing and, indeed, radical social criticism cannot be separated from one another without violating the work's raison d'etre? What if accepting Mills' structural analysis of the concentration and integration of power leads quite logically and necessarily to an analysis of those who wield that power and the historically specific projects to which they apply its use? Weber did this, as did Marx. So, too, beginning most clearly with The Power Elite, did C. Wright Mills.

This is why it is curious and unfortunate that Wolfe's assessment makes no mention of the Cuban Missile Crisis, for that such a thing was not only possible, but probable, is arguably the great animating force running throughout The Power Elite and spilling out into all, or very nearly all, of Mills' subsequent publications. It is this fact that interpreters of Mills generally either miss or under play. Perhaps it is that they give Mills' own "trilogy" self-assessment too much weight. Having established himself as a tenured member of the discipline's leading faculty, the mid-1950's saw Mills set his aim on what for him would be a higher ambition, not higher for personal rewards (although Oakes and Vidich would disagree), but higher in the sense of being historically relevant, that is to say, influential on a scale that shaped history-making, which meant, as an American, simply on a national scale. International respectability and alliances were edifying and useful and, alas, nonessential. Due to the specifics of modern historical social development, influencing the American course of history was tantamount to influencing the total course of human history.

Thus, The Power Elite not only addresses the concentration of power, it is itself an attempt to exercise a form of power. In it, Mills moves from being an excellent sociologist to being an excellent sociologist who is also a skilled political writer. [3] He hoped to be so skilled, in fact, that his interventions directly into public life—as he called them, in an act of self-deprecation, his "preachings"—would bypass the academy and be accepted to some meaningful

degree by publics. Only through their democratic actions would there result tangible, meaningful historical difference in the direction of social change. Not so much hubris as the result of dismay and alarm (or perhaps a mixture of all three), Mills sought to engage what he called the mindless "main drift" of a bureaucratically determined history-making set-up, which he saw (and not him alone, of course) as tending toward the worldwide spread of bureaucratic unfreedom and permanent war among competing undemocratic national elites. This historical situation was, as it were, historically unprecedented and grave. The first-half of the twentieth century featured two world wars and the use of atomic bombs followed by the advent and deployment of thermonuclear weapon systems. The threat of continued worldwide military conflict and large-scale nuclear war was real. To avert an apocalyptic war by restoring the realistic hope of reason and freedom playing a predominant role in the conduct of human affairs, this is what motivated The Power Elite and its author.

Understood as such, we can see that The Power Elite has little to do with perpetually answering the question, "Who Rules America?" (Domhoff 2005 [1967]), nor does it make sense that in its wake there were inspired innumerable studies of the increasing integration of corporate and government power and various and sundry subsequent insults this has caused to "the public interest" (for a review of the "corporate liberalism" literature in political sociology, see Cornoy 1984). Indeed, the emergence generally of a so-called "critical sociology" that is manifestly inspired by Mills is largely out of sync, not only with a basic grasp of the factual situation that Mills addresses in The Power Elite, but also with all of his "preachings" following thereafter. Mills was not interested in establishing a Millsian branch of sociology that set up its own self-marginalizing journals and professional societies and that used Paul Lazarfeld's preferred methods of research to study topics of interest to left-liberal social critics. Not only The Power Elite, but The Sociological Imagination (1959), Images of Man (1960b), and other more clearly "sociological" subsequent works make this point abundantly clear, or so one might have imagined.

Mills' interest, which he shared with sociology's founders, was the totality of modern and, increasingly, postmodern society. The Power Elite announces an interest in direct participation in the making of human history in the hope of directly affecting its outcome. This is the only reasonable understanding of his self-described "plain Marxism" and the only interpretive framework that makes sense of his dedication to helping to form a "new left." Horowitz therefore exaggerates only slightly when he notes that:

> Mills's ...defense of 'plain Marxism' and his growingly strident attack on 'liberalism as a dead end,' must each be seen as an ultimate rejection of Weber...(1983: 186).

As the Frankfurt School demonstrated better than any other group of social theorists, it is readily possible to incorporate the considerable fruits of Weber's penetrating analyses of the "administered world" into a critical theory of society. This is how The Power Elite should be read, as marking Mills' emergence as a pragmatist-trained and distinctively American critical theorist of society. [4]

Merely four years later, Mills would find himself riding around Cuba in a Jeep with Fidel Castro while President John F. Kennedy was forced to explain to a visiting French journalist critical of U.S. policy toward Cuba, "I'm not some sociologist, I'm President of the United States" (Beschloss 1991: 658).

II. Playing in Peoria, Port Huron, and the Pentagon

It is one kind of irony that The Power Elite would emerge in a society in which many of its leading social analysts, Daniel Bell prominent among them, were actively declaring "the end of ideology" (see Bell 2000 [1962], Mills 1960). Yet it was a far more disconcerting irony that the ideology of the end of ideology was in fact gaining empirical credence by its institutionalization and enculturation in a mid-century "American way of life." The contemporary value of The Power Elite is very much tied to its prescient analysis of the process through which mass society was reproducing itself out of itself. The emergent social totality was one in which "the cultural apparatus" and its celebrity-producing star-system played an ever-greater role in defining the meaning of collective human experience, such that the taken-for-granted "culture" increasingly acquired a commercial and centrally administered quality. Ultimately, as the distance from autonomous, spontaneous, and local culture increased, "culture" became sufficiently ethereal in its cynical self-understanding to accept with little fuss its unabashed use as ideological support for seemingly any political expediency. The preponderance of myriad mass broadcast circuses led Mills to be among the first to pronounce the onset of a "fourth epoch," a "post-modern society" defined by the eclipse of

autonomous individuality in possession of reason and freedom as operative cultural realities. In place of modernity, Mills feared that "cheerful robots" would strut on the stage of strip mall and sidewalk sale, the mirror image of "the higher immorality" in a society polarized between obscene concentrations of power and equally obscene forms of powerlessness (see Mills 1959, Ryan 1976, Dandaneau 2001).

This sort of descriptive rhetoric drives critics like Alan Wolfe crazy. As Wolfe writes:

> As he brings his book to an end, Mills adopts a term once strongly identified with conservative political theorists. Appalled by the spread of democracy, conservative European writers proclaimed the twentieth century as the age of 'mass society.'
>
> 'The United States is not altogether a mass society,' Mills wrote, but he then went on to write as if it were.
>
> Mills had become so persuaded of the power of the power elite that he seemed to have lost all hope that the American people could find themselves and put a stop to the abuses he detected (2000: 379-380).
>
> In these passages, Wolfe accuses Mills of antidemocratic allegiances, disingenuous writing, and self-delusion. Wolfe also regards Mills as arrogant and irresponsible as well as, in the end, anti-American.
>
> That sense of engagement with America once sparked writers like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman to hold their country up to a higher standard. All too often Mills does not share their generous sense of American life and writes instead as cantankerous critic, sour in his anger, rejectionist in his views of the world around him (2000: 380).

But Wolfe may underestimate how amenable Mills' legacy has been to the type of "affirmative culture" analyzed by Herbert Marcuse (1969 [1937]). As noted previously, most of Mills' putative followers are usually content with "critical sociology" and making award of the C. Wright Mills Award. [5] Certainly, Oxford's New Edition of The Power Elite, featuring Wolfe's damning appraisal of at least half of the book (not to mention the character of its author), does little to promote Mills' point of view in Peoria.

In Mills' defense, however, he does in fact write that "the United States is not altogether a mass society"; indeed, his overriding point is succinctly and clearly rendered as follows: "The bottom of this society is politically fragmented, and even as a passive fact, increasingly powerless: at the bottom there is emerging a mass society" (1956: 324, emphasis added). As a critical theorist, Mills aimed to counteract what he saw as a rapidly developing tendency toward corruption of democratic life by clearly identifying the emerging, alarming threat to its vitality: in a word, bureaucratization. Mills wrote The Power Elite so that it would be accessible to what ever remained of a reading public (not unlike much of the best of Wolfe's sociology), in the hope that his clarion call might contribute to efforts to forestall and reverse what he regarded as an obviously perverse and, needless to say, anti-American social tendency. This is hardly the behavior of a social critic who is rejecting communication with the world around him, his own society included. For this charge to stick to the wall, it would be necessary to explain why Mills poured his heart into The Causes of World War Three (1958), which sold over 100,000 copies, Listen, Yankee! (1960), which sold over 400,000, and such overtly political tracts as "Letter to the New Left" (1960a), which rejects political complacency among even the disheartened and marginal defenders of the ideals of social equality and participatory self-government. Horowtiz seems much closer to the mark: Mills was "An American Utopian," the subtitle of his biography, although certainly a more radical critic than Emerson, Whitman, or Wolfe. Perhaps it is that the critic of "the American Celebration" doesn't play as well as assigned reading in the canon of The PBS-sanctioned American Experience. Given, however, Mills' increasing use as the stuff of 50's nostalgia (see Halberstam 1994), no one in today's postmodern society should be surprised if Mills were required reading Peoria Central High School. Politically speaking, it wouldn't matter.

When not ensnared in nostalgia for "New York in the 50's" (see Wakefield 1999), Mills is sometimes appears as the figment of Port Huron and the 60's student movement collective (mass) memory. Whereas Mills was more concerned with what Comrade Khrushchev was saying about Comrade Stalin's crimes to the 20th Party Congress than with what Jack Kerouac was writing as he drove across America, Mills' insistent reach for the big picture, what Dan Wakefield remembers him as calling the act of "taking it big" (see 2000; Dandaneau 2001), endeared him to many among an emerging, generationally construed New Left. Primarily via the influence of Tom Hayden, who wrote an M.A. Thesis on Mills and who was principal author of "The Port Huron Statement" (2005 [1962]), Mills, and in particular, the Mills of The Power Elite, is understood as a seminal influence on student activism in the U.S. in the 1960's (see also Gitlin 2005). Even though deceased prematurely in 1962 at only age 46, Mills' writings lived on whether as part of American Radical Thought: The Libertarian Tradition (1970), or, in the title of Jamison and

Eyerman's oft-cited retrospective, simply as Seeds of the Sixties (1994).

So, the kids were reading Mills and, later, Marcuse, who himself went out of his way in the preface to One-Dimensional Man (1964) to acknowledge Mills' importance. [6] But what of the power elite themselves? Did they read Mills?

Other than with respect to Fidel Castro, who is said to have held discussions on The Power Elite whilst hold-up in Sierra Maestra, we may never know how far Mills' analysis of power elites penetrated their elite, guarded inner sanctums. There is no evidence, for example, that President Eisenhower or his speech writers drew even indirectly from Mills in composing Eisenhower's nonetheless pointed farewell critique of "the military-industrial complex." And even though Mills traveled to the Soviet Union and Poland, there is no evidence that his often-confrontational engagements with communist officials in either country led them, much less their superiors and their superiors still further up, to any sort of intellectual or political engagement with his ideas. And while Mills is likely to have been on President Kennedy's mind in the passage quoted above in interaction with French journalist, Jean Daniel, there is no evidence that Kennedy actually read Listen, Yankee!, such as he later claimed, famously, with respect to Michael Harrington's The Other America.

But it is not therefore irrelevant that Eisenhower would issue an analysis so clearly consonant with Mills'. In fact, it would be hard to imagine a figure more clearly embodying the characteristics of Mills' prototypical member of the power elite than Dwight David Eisenhower himself, former Supreme Allied Commander for Europe, President of Columbia University, and two-term President of the United States. That Ike sat down to tell The Great American People to beware "the total influence—economic, political, even spiritual" of "the military-industrial complex" ought to weigh, it seems, rather heavily in our appraisal of The Power Elite. That he did so firm in the conviction that "[t]he potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist," should be counted among the most ringing endorsements any thesis has ever, anywhere, received.

> **We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together (1961).**

So the general-turned-president and political leader of the conservative party chose to take leave of office, on national television, in prime time. Perhaps this individual member of the power elite was not as "mindless" as Mills feared commonplace, but, sadly, his particular act of self-criticism had as little consequence as Mills' structural analysis of bureaucratic mindlessness predicted.

III. The Best Evidence

It is one thing to discuss particular responses to the work, quite another to come full-face with the workings of what the book is about. That is, academics[7] can spill ink all day and night on the text, The Power Elite, but the far more important subject is that which the book addresses: actually existing power elites.

Here, social science—positivist or critical or what have you—quickly runs up against an especially delicate and confounding conundrum: a social science thesis that, if correct, cannot be sufficiently supported by evidence. If Mills' analysis were essentially if not entirely accurate, then the very power elite he had identified would, by definition, enjoy sufficient power to more or less prevent exposure of its most undemocratic acts. In other words, if Mills is right that the United States is governed by an unelected, unaccountable, increasingly integrated and, not unimportantly, increasingly self-conscious power elite, then these self-same individuals would presumably recognize the danger to the legitimacy of the system of power in which they occupy the top positions posed by exposure to social science and, from there, to a reading public. Some, like Eisenhower, might go public with their concerns. But the majority of such an elite would no doubt equate "national security" and the security of the power elite in toto, thus establishing safeguards and methods designed to buffer elite decision-makers from public scrutiny and subsequent accountability.

A social science of political power—in this society, at this point in its historical development—would then, presumably, be left looking for what ever skimpy evidence of such machinations is available. Not an exactly quixotic endeavor, however. After all, history is replete with cases-in-point of the fact that even the exceedingly powerful make mistakes. And as human beings who are operating in human institutions, even the so-called power elite must necessarily leave traces, and perhaps a great deal more than that, of its workings. Finally, it bears to recall that

power—especially a claim to total power—is never simply given; elite structure, like all social structure, is in constant need of reproduction.

The empirically minded social scientist might thus query: Are new legal and administrative institutions of government being created as substitutes for existing democratic seats of power? Are ideological justifications for politically expedient uses of authority being created and propounded as necessary and just? Are undemocratic methods for the control of information, election of leaders, repression of dissent, and support of vested interests being devised? Social science might also, of course, benefit from occasional or not-so-occasional slip-ups in the prosecution of various elite-directed projects. The blanket term "scandal" describes these, but it also obfuscates their significance. The sociologist is interested in scandals rooted in structural arrangements, that is, systematically produced scandal, not those resulting from idiosyncratic or merely personal failings. Reasonable inferences might follow from the latter concerning the institutional structure of power as such, whereas the former distract attraction form the latter and potentially confuse the would-be citizen-analyst.

Mills notes that the growth of the power elite, with respect to which "the military ascendancy" is essential, dates from "Pearl Harbor" (see 1956: 198). The fear aroused by a military attack against the United States and the immediate national resolve to enter wholesale into the second world war of the century was wedded to an already vastly enlarged New Deal state bureaucracy, the result being a "greatly speeded up" increase in the concentration and integration of national power (1956: 274). Less often discussed is the fact that numerous observers at the time and, presently, on the basis of historical documents newly available to researchers, many more, are left incredulous by the fact that the U.S. Navy broke the Japanese military code only some 100-odd days after the attack on Pearl Harbor. This code-breaking achievement is celebrated because it was essential to the decisive U.S. naval victory in the Battle of Midway in June, 1942, a mere seven months after Pearl Harbor. And while school children are taught that Pearl Harbor was a horrible defeat of U.S. forces, the truth is that the fleet attacked that day was less its only strategically valuable vessels, three aircraft carriers (each on separate missions), and that therefore the result of the attack, which led to the U.S. entry into the war in both theatres of conflict, was a disaster for Imperial Japan's long-term war aims [8].

Fast-forward from December, 1941, to the first days of the Truman Administration. The three-term president is dead. Just as the fourth-term commences, the now-former Vice President must be informed by the Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff not only of the existence of the Manhattan Project, but of the need to use its fruits vis-à-vis as fresh targets in Japan. This same Harry S. Truman, never really an insider to the power elite even during his presidency, would sign into law the National Security Act of 1948, creating institutions whose very purpose was to provide the executive and the military-intelligence branch of government freedom from democratic constraint and accountability. He would also engage the United States in what was effectively a spatially and technologically contained version of World War III with China (Eastasia) and the Soviet Union (Eurasia) on the Korean Peninsula, and find it necessary a short time later to remove a glaringly insubordinate general from command of what amounted to U.S. protectorates, colonies, and Legions in Asia. For this, Truman, Mrs. Roosevelt, and a good many of their fellow Democrats were denounced by the hysterical anticommunist right wing—followers of MacArthur and McCarthy—as highly suspect if not thoroughly un-American. In this world, Eisenhower and the Administration most directly analyzed by Mills between the pages of The Power Elite thus came to power.

Under Eisenhower (and, when he was ill, Vice President Nixon as acting president), the United States developed, deployed, and continuously expanded a capacity to exterminate human life worldwide via thermonuclear weapons (a fact both so common and so profound that it is worth pausing for a moment to ponder). Against the backdrop of atomic and hydrogen bomb tests and non-stop construction of missile silos, nuclear submarines, and intercontinental bombers, the simultaneous on-going covert political and military intervention in myriad ostensibly sovereign nation-states' internal political affairs, including use of violence against heads of state, must have seemed minor. Where subversion was not possible, the Eisenhower Administration did not hesitate to use espionage, such as regular U-2 flyovers of the Soviet Union, including, for example, on May Day, 1960.

Here we arrive at the onset of what T.V. historian Michael Beschloss (1991) calls "the crisis years," 1960-1963. Given its position as following The Power Elite but not so distant as to allow for intervening structural change, this brief but highly eventful historical period may provide the best evidence for Mills' thesis in The Power Elite. The furor that erupted upon the downing of Francis Gary Power's U-2 spy plane ended years of calculated rapprochement pursued by Eisenhower. There would be no trip by the Eisenhower family to the Soviet Union mirroring Khrushchev's early tour of the United States. Less than one year later, a new President would refuse to risk

world war by authorizing full-scale military support for what became known as "the Bay of Pigs" invasion, a CIA-led effort by Cuban exiles to overthrow the revolutionary government of Cuba. During this period, President Kennedy, a former Navy Ensign, further undermined his never-good credibility with the military-industrial establishment by threatening action against U.S. Steel (using a national television broadcast, no less), and by pursuing policies that threatened the favorable extra-normal profits that accrued regularly to other key oligopolistic industries, oil among them. From the point of view of the elite members of the committed anticommunist right wing, President Kennedy's womanizing and risky self-medication, the suspect electioneering in Illinois and elsewhere in 1960, not to mention his tentative support for the Civil Rights Movement, must have been viewed as relatively less grievous than his support for a nuclear test ban treaty with the Soviet Union, his inaction during the Bay of Pigs and Cuban Missile Crisis, and his pointed and, seemingly, growing hesitancy concerning the prospect of full-scale U.S. military involvement in Southeast Asia. The American University Commencement Address, the so-called Peace Speech, of June, 1963, would have been nothing but the coup de grace in a fundamentally disturbing trend.

But before conciliatory, even philosophical, speeches about peaceful coexistence between elites Soviet and American, there would first be a nuclear standoff the likes of which the world has never seen before or since. If 1960 gave us the U-2 incident and 1961 the Bay of Pigs, 1962 featured the crisis par excellence, the Cuban Missile Crisis. As historians have now shown, the U.S. military chiefs wanted nothing but war with Cuba, and, by extension, war with the Soviet Union. They also wanted nothing but full-scale war in Vietnam and its immediate environs. While these facts are now well known, it is cause for extra pause and reflection. Mills' thesis pointed to an increasingly integrated elite composed primarily of the national political directorate (namely, the president and his inner circle, particular in matters of national security), the military elite (namely, the joint chiefs and their immediate subordinates), and the corporate elite (namely, the CEO's and Board Chairs and their immediate lieutenants among the top 50 or 100 multinational corporations). President Kennedy showed that merely the scion of a rich and politically involved New England family, using personal wealth and the power of celebrity to his advantage, could obtain the nation's highest elected office. Still, he did not mesh comfortably with the existing elites, especially those exercising power outside the direct reach of his authority. Imagine the gulf in sensibility between Kennedy and his Air Force Chief of Staff, General Curtis LeMay of Columbus, Ohio, who cut his teeth overseeing the firebombing of Tokyo while JFK was merely commanding PT-109. No disinterested military bureaucrat, LeMay, it is often overlooked, would serve as George Wallace's Vice Presidential running mate in 1968. But neither MacArthur nor, later, LeMay, crossed the Rubicon (at least not openly), and Kennedy's personal stand against many of his many senior advisors, including military advisors, LeMay prominent among them, meant that war with Cuba would be relegated to a costly and ultimately ridiculous Operation Mongoose and a still-on-going merciless trade embargo.

In these same years, Mills himself, as did other sociologists, acquired FBI surveillance (see Keen 1999, Dandaneau 2001). The internal civil liberties of American citizens had long been violated on a scale so massive as even today to defy comprehension by most people. Intelligence agencies spied on American citizens and harassed legitimate political organizations. Unsuspecting soldiers, whole cities and communities as well as specific minority groups, such as African-Americans and disabled children, were subjected to life-threatening radiation testing, sterilization, and other forms of heinous, Nazi-like biomedical experimentation (see Department of Energy c. 1994). Intelligence agencies engaged in proactive counterintelligence operations against groups identified secretly as threats to the vaguely understood "national security," including the FBI's now-infamous COINTELLPRO's that began in 1956 and continued until 1971, when they were exposed.

Mills' FBI files are comparatively pedestrian to that which would be, for example, eventually amassed in response to Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Most of the 200-odd pages are of little historical interest. The files do reveal, however, that Mills received a death threat and that he was moved to purchase a pistol for self-protection. Unfortunately, significant passages of these files are redacted, and we still do not know today the identity of the half-a-dozen or so informants who reported on Mills' whereabouts and activities. Likewise, the CIA, for its part, claims to have no substantive files on Mills, which is typical of CIA responsiveness to Freedom of Information Act requests. One might expect Central Intelligence Agency to have monitored an American citizen who traveled more than once to the Soviet Union, to Poland, and who worked with Fidel Castro and his government, not to mention who lectured widely as a severe critic, not just of U.S. foreign policy generally, but with respect to the most sensitive point in the pressure vice known as the Cold War: Cuba.

Mills died in March of 1962. He suffered a second major heart attack. The first occurred in 1960 just prior to a scheduled national television debate on NBC on the subject of U.S. policy toward Cuba. While Mills was left in a

coma for days, the American people were left with Congressman Charles O. Porter of Oregon filling Mills' shoes vis-à-vis Adolf A. Berle. Mills' death was marked by a Washington Post and Times Herald obituary and Castro sent a wreath to adorn Mills' grave. Seven months later, the Cuban Missile Crisis erupted.

One can only speculate how Mills would have approached that crisis. Likewise, one can only speculate as to how the native Texan and 1934 Dallas Technical High School graduate might have analyzed the events of November, 1963. Surely, though, Mills' view of President Kennedy, which was very dim from the outset of his Administration, might have improved considerably as a result of Kennedy's June, 1963, Commencement Address at American University, which Kennedy delivered six months before his assassination and which is perhaps second only to Eisenhower's Farewell as free copy for the veracity of The Power Elite. Kennedy told the graduates that day:

> I have...chosen this time and place to discuss a topic on which ignorance too often abounds and the truth too rarely perceived. And that is the most important topic on earth: peace. What kind of peace do I mean and what kind of peace do we seek? Not a Pax Americana enforced on the world by American weapons of war. Not the peace of the grave or the security of the slave. I am talking about genuine peace....
>
> I speak of peace because of the new face of war. Total war makes no sense in an age where great powers can maintain large and relatively invulnerable nuclear forces and refuse to surrender without resort to those forces....
>
> Today the expenditures of billons of dollars every year on weapons acquired for the purpose of making sure we never need them is essential to the keeping of peace. But surely the acquisition of such idle stockpiles—which can only destroy and never create—is not the only, much less the most efficient, means of assuring peace....

Calling repeatedly for American self-critique and the eventual abolition of Cold War mentalities and institutions, Kennedy staked his presidency, and his reelection, on the avoidance of what he called a "collective death-wish for the world."

From the point of view of assessing The Power Elite, the key point is to underscore that the events heretofore discussed did not occur upon debate in Congress or after national public discussion. In fact, little of the history that has occupied the last several paragraphs was even known until relatively recently, to well-informed citizens or otherwise, most of whom might have been simply dumbstruck or more likely obstinately incredulous were she or he have somehow learned of it as it was unfolding: e.g., "What do you mean, 'President Johnson disavows the Warren Commission Report?!'" [9] That the American people are largely left with a pack of failed Congressional investigations and sensationalist Hollywood movies in response to these deadly sobering events—events which also led to the downfall of Khrushchev, not insignificantly, and the ascendancy in the Soviet Union of a comparably illiberal governing elite—is itself an indication of the undemocratic structure of the American polis extending forward in time from the early 1960's.

Thus, as we now know, the Gulf of Tokin Resolution, an act of Congress giving carte blanche to the Johnson Administration in its zeal to escalate the war in Vietnam, was based on wholly erroneous intelligence. And, as we now know, the Nixon Campaign's efforts to forestall a peaceful conclusion of the War in Vietnam in 1968 helped secure the former Vice President's election to the presidency that just barely eluded him in 1960, this, whereas previously only the murder of his principal political foe, Senator Robert F. Kennedy, was known to be the key event opening the door to Nixon's rehabilitation as a national political force and his subsequent policies that included liberal domestic programs as well as the prosecution of a secret, unauthorized war in Cambodia and the murder of democratically elected heads of state and counterrevolutionary insurgency elsewhere in the world.

Rightly or wrongly, the Watergate Scandal, of course, is the mother of all scandals in American political history, but its basic structure as a de facto coup d'etat is rarely acknowledged. Mostly rooted in illegal attempts to shape the election of 1972 (in which Governor Wallace was severely wounded in an assassination attempt), Watergate provides an unusual glimpse into a gapping whole in the fabric of systemic elite obfuscation. Top members of the national intelligence establishment, including but not limited to Mark Felt, purposively leaked information that they hoped would be fatally damaging to President Nixon's legitimacy. And, it was. A failed, law-breaking, and psychologically fragile president was thus forced from office by covert actions of the elite establishment surrounding him. That the Supreme Court demanded subpoenaed evidence and that Congress prepared articles of impeachment does not vitiate the fact that neither branch of federal government would have had knowledge of Nixon's crimes, such as we do know of them, without the instigation of an illicit process of delegitimation from secretive actors within government who lacked legal authority for their actions.

This concerns only what is acknowledged and known. But, in the case of Watergate, we also know at least one

thing precisely that we do not know, which is rare. We know that someone deemed it necessary to erase 18.5 minutes of presidential conversation from the infamous Watergate Tapes. The National Archive in Washington D.C. suggests, in their display of the actual tape-recorder, that the erased conversation probably concerned the break-in at the Watergate offices of the Democratic National Committee Chairperson. Whether this speculation is accurate or not is not likely ever to be known, although Nixon's Chief of Staff, H.R. Haldeman, the person with whom President Nixon was conversing during time in which the gap in the tape recording appears, noted in his posthumously published memoir that, when President Nixon curiously referred to the Bay of Pigs invasion, which he often did, Nixon, speculated Haldeman, was actually referring to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy (Haldeman 1978, 1994).

One imagines a tired reader. A reader who does not now want to be reminded again of the flimsy evidence suggesting, as in 1968, a similar campaign-led effort to alter the outcome of the election in 1980, or the arms-for-hostages and later arms-for-money deals associated with President Reagan's senior National Security Council advisors and his Administration's illegal war in Nicaragua (see Sick 1991). Furthermore, one imagines that President G. H. W. Bush's stunning and incredibly brutal seizure of the President of Panama by means of military invasion, as depicted, for example, in the Academy Award-winning documentary, Panama Deception, is relatively familiar to most readers, as would be Ambassador April Glaspie's utterance before reporters made famous by H. Ross Perot in his on-air, mid-debate assault on George H. W. Bush: "Obviously," said the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, "I didn't think, and nobody else did, that he Iraqis were going to take all of Kuwait," referring to informal U.S. communications with Saddam Hussein prior to Iraq's 1991 invasion of Kuwait. And certainly, readers of this publication need not be reminded of the election of 2000 or events subsequent to the terrorist attacks of 2001, in which jets were crashed or were intended to crash into symbols of each of Mills' elite triad.

Even if the details of this or that "scandal" are doubtful and perhaps more the product of paranoid fantasy than established historical fact, the crucial question remains, does Mills' The Power Elite, now 50 years dated, anticipate the structures and processes standing back of the undemocratic concentrations of coordinated power that have been used on a regular basis to prosecute acts which stand in violation of U.S. and international law as well as that contradict the principles of American democracy which are the putative sources of legitimacy for the American state? Yes or no?

The 60's social movements helped to check some of the most blatant abuses of the power elite. Were it not for the activists who burglarized the FBI in 1971, well before the Church Committee was impaneled, the world would not, for example, know anything about COINTELLPRO (see Cunningham 1994). And, certainly, the anti-war movement was a significant factor in the tragic, tortured withdrawal—but still, the withdrawal—of U.S. forces from Vietnam. Yet, qualifications aside, even a simple listing of key (known) events in U.S. political history since 1956 suggests, apart from rare but heroic moments of countervailing struggle, a more or less uninterrupted continuation of (apparent) usurpations. Indeed, it is reasonable to speculate that, in the absence of a fundamental collapse in its structure, the power elite's worst "crimes," as Pinter suggests as the proper vocabulary, are probably not yet known nor likely ever to be sufficiently documented, at least sufficiently documented so as to meet the test of a tape-recorded confession, the so-called "smoking gun" test, which is perhaps the most ironic product of Watergate. Eisenhower's Farewell Address to the Nation, Kennedy's American University Address, H. R. Haldeman's memoirs—and testimony from abroad, particularly in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact satellite regimes—are as close to a smoking gun as Mills and his way of analyzing power are likely to get.

IV. Is Mills Winston Smith or Emmanuel Goldstein?

George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four is arguably the most discussed and most familiar single work in twentieth-century English language literature, yet it is, nonetheless, rarely well understood (see Dandaneau and Falcone 1998[10]). In the usual reading, Winston Smith is the book's hero, O'Brien its villain. But Smith, a middle-level functionary, is as self-deluded as the Proles he disparages as often as glorifies. They horde the petty material goods of life while he, Winston, hordes shaving razors and a sense of his own historical importance; they consume beer and pornography ("prole feed"), while he covets Victory Gin and his diary; Smith denounces the Proles' ignorance while he takes pleasure in expertly rewriting history, his work at the Ministry of Truth. Vis-à-vis the Inner Party, Smith is similarly self-deluded. O'Brien entraps Smith with deceit and then proceeds to torture him, but Smith cannot

sever his affection for power and ends up loving Big Brother despite it all. Ostensibly critical of Doublethink, Smith practices it with acuity.

Likewise, the usual interpretation of Goldstein is satisfied with comparing the character with the historical figure of Leon Trotsky (the pen name of Lev Davidovich Bronstein). Goldstein's text-within-a-text, The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism, is therefore understood as a metaphor for exiled "truth" used effectively by totalitarianism as a means of policing its ideological borders. Failing to understand the totality of his situation, Smith is easily lured into O'Brien's trap. Had he been a lesser thinker—say, one not fascinated by the equation 2 + 2 = 4—he might have enjoyed a similar fate but via means of a failed hyper-conformity, as in the case of Parsons, or in a failed rebellion of the flesh, as in the case of Julia. But Winston Smith was an intellectual workman of the Outer Party, and as such, required Goldstein upon which to exercise his soul during regular "Two Minutes Hate."

The chief sociological problematic of Orwell's classic, as in Mills', is the anticipation of the ideological consequences of power in a total society or, the same thing, in a thoroughly undemocratic social order. The present discussion of The Power Elite might therefore profitably conclude with an assessment that asks if Mills was as self-deluded as Winston Smith or whether The Power Elite is as penetrating as Trotsky's The Revolution Betrayed (for the United States is, or was, a revolutionary society as much as was the Soviet Union)? Further complicating the question is the evidence provided by Orwell's own extraordinary ideological reception: despite his book's unparalleled popularity, it has been so regularly distorted by Cold War struggles that its core reflexivity, the auto-critique set in Oceania of the bourgeois intellectual's self-delusion, is scarcely recognized and certainly not much talked about. Harold Pinter, who lives in Airstrip One, is an exception to this general rule.

Perhaps in this last observation, we unexpectedly have our answer. No one doubts, as in Wolfe's analysis, that global capitalism is a revolutionizing force driven from within by its inherent growth requirements, and that postmodern culture speeds up the production of commercialized lives and spreads itself thin to all four corners of the globe. Analysts who discuss the details of either, as did Mills, are bound to have their work dated by that which they are talking about. Likewise, everyday electoral politics, even in the United States, do matter because not all significant political problems are of world-historical significance, and nostalgia is what it is what it is (repeat ad nauseam).

But the advent of every new generation means that power, even in a total society, must struggle to reproduce itself, lest a new generation become caught-up in history's unfinished and unfalsified business and ask too many impertinent questions. To wit: Is it not perfectly telling that, as Soviet freighters ferried nuclear weapons to the tiny island of Cuba, C. Wright Mills' intellectual contemporaries gathered at his memorial service on New York City's Morningside Heights to murmur on his having lost his mind? Or, that leading sociologists even today would gloss the structurally determined possibility (dare I say, probability), that the United States would again be engaged in potentially disastrous war on demonstrably false pretexts, its people and resources again hitched to grandiose acts of criminality at home and abroad? Indeed, is it not perfectly clear, as Mr. Pinter might say, that the United States most desperately needs a stiff dose of perestroika and glasnost?

Endnotes

1. In the mid-1980's, Wolfe moved away from an earlier and perhaps stronger sympathy with the sort of radical political sensibilities and commitments embodied by C. Wright Mills. While there is nothing in itself suspect about his shift in political thinking, it is, however, ironic that the Society for the Study of Social Problems awarded the C. Wright Mills Award to Wolfe's Whose Keeper?: Social Science and Moral Obligation (1989), which announces this shift.

2. Unlike Weber's work, Michels is not even once discussed or cited, even though Mosca and Pareto are referenced on several occasions. See discussion of the Germanic versus the Franco-Italian influences on Mills' theory of power in Horowitz (1983), especially pages 180-182. Mills does, however, provide an excerpt from Michels on the "iron law of oligarchy" in his Images of Man.

3. "Political writer" is Mills' own 1953 autobiographical description of his ambition and telos. See Dandaneau 2001: 80-84, especially 82.

4. Mills' pragmatist metatheoretical proclivities are not the only aspect of his work that distinguishes it as "American." There is of course the influence of Veblen (see Tilman 1984, 2004). And there is also the fact that Mills --unlike Horkheimer and Adorno, for example, but more in line with Marcuse-- had a developing interest in what he termed "the hungry nation bloc" (see

Dandaneau 2001: 74-76). Listen, Yankee!, his time spent lecturing in Mexico, and his largely unfinished magnum opus, Comparative Sociology, suggest the increasing importance of Mills' movement away from a strictly Anglo-European sociology, which is characteristic of American as opposed to European critical theorists.

5. An illustrious award counting among its recipients dozens of excellent works and excellent sociologists. See http://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/m/24/pageId/47 for a list of past recipients.

6. The connections between Mills and the principal members of the so-called Frankfurt School were several but always fleeting. A not exhaustive list of points of contact includes: a) via Gerth, who once himself enjoyed the support of Frankfurt's Institute for Social Research (see Jay 1996, but note also the letter from Mills to Gerth probably in 1952, in which Mills writes: "The Frankfurt bunch are not going to let me (and I doubt you) into their inner circle: i.e., give us enough money to do what we want to do: shuttle between here and there and write what we want about both places" (Mills and Mills 2000: 168); b) at Columbia University, where the Institute for Social Research was famously in residence during the Second World War and where Franz Neumann would later remain as a member of the faculty; c) during this time, Mills provided an anonymous editorial review (held as part of the C. Wright Mills Papers at the University of Texas-Austin) of the manuscript for Horkheimer's Eclipse of Reason (2005); d) in a 1954 occasional piece in the Saturday Review in which Mills notes the importance of several aspects of Frankfurt School work, he writes: "I know of no better way to become acquainted with this endeavor [that is, "the classical sociological endeavor"] in a high form of modern expression than to read the periodical, Studies in Philosophy and Social Science, published by The Institute of Social Research. Unfortunately, it is available only in the morgues of university libraries, and to the great loss of American social studies, several of the Institute's leading members, among them Max Horkheimer and Theodore [sic] Adorno, have returned to Germany" (in Horowitz 1963: 572); e) in 1957 or 1958, Mills lectured at "Frankfurt University" (see 1958: 173, acknowledgements); f) Mills cites a study by the Institute's Otto Kirchheimer in The Power Elite (1956: 407); f) Mills quotes Horkheimer in The Sociological Imagination (1959: 122-123) and sought input from Marcuse on early drafts of the manuscript (C. Wright Mills Papers); g) Leo Lowenthal is photographed with Mills at Mills' New York apartment "in the late 1940's" (see Mills and Mills 2000) and acknowledged as a source, as is Marcuse's Reason and Revolution, for White Collar (1951: 357).

7. Students interested in the strictly academic reception of The Power Elite should consult Domhoff and Ballard (1968), Horowitz (1983), and Aronowitz (2004). These provide useful secondary discussion as well as easy access to the influential criticisms leveled against Mills by Talcott Parsons, Daniel Bell, Seymour Martin Lipset, Robert Lynd, and other disciplinary luminaries, as well as sympathetic criticisms from such figures as Paul Sweezy and Tom Bottomore. The present essay does not treat The Power Elite as an academic contribution to social theory per se but as a contribution to the critical theory of society. The perspective taken is consistent with the functions of "radical history" long ago set out by Howard Zinn and that include: a) highlighting extreme historical conditions, b) political expose, c) culture critique, d) recovery of utopian possibilities, and e) critique of failed historical ambitions (see 1990: 35-55).

8. My intention in this essay is not to provide extensive historical references, as though symbolizing a well-founded scholarly historical terrain. In any case, such references would be either unnecessary or inadequate, depending on the reader's point of view. Still, one might profitably review such diverse scholarly sources as Gaddis (2005), Errol Morris' 2003 Academy Award-winning documentary film, The Fog of War, and Kellner (2005). An example of the popular and largely sensationalistic literature surrounding these events of recent history is Stinnett (2001) on Pearl Harbor and Lifton (1992) on the assassination of President Kennedy. The existence of "true crime" reportage and its "conspiracy theorist" devotees stigmatizes, fairly as well unfairly, all efforts to address the dubious political history of the past fifty years. Works by the likes of Gary Wills (1968), Norman Mailer (1995), and James Carroll (2006) help to counter the main tendency, but the main tendency remains nonetheless (see Dandaneau 2001).

9. Actually, LBJ did so repeatedly, privately while still in office and publicly, in an interview with Walter Cronkite, after leaving office.

10. This thesis is primarily Falcone's, whose original statement is her M.A. Thesis in philosophy, "Dystopian Elements in Richard Rorty's Liberal Utopia," accepted at Michigan State University.

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The Other Frankfurt School

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As director of the Institute of Social Research ("Frankfurt School"), Max Horkheimer led an exodus of radical scholars across Europe and the Atlantic, cultivated rich networks of international support, oversaw important research projects, and authored or oversaw the production of some of the most influential, scholarly texts of the twentieth century. And as the leader of an organization with financial resources Horkheimer extended a lifeline to numerous scholars desperately in need of assistance. [1] Yet, his relationship toward the Institute (ISR) was complicated upon arrival in the United States and it led, over time, to a decisive rupture between the so-called "inner circle" and the "dispersed forces" of critical sociology working along the periphery of the Institute.

Zoltán Tar (1984) portrays the Institute's path under the direction of Horkheimer as a gradual transition away from Marxism toward a bleak cultural critique that found its expression in works such as Eclipse of Reasonand Dialectic of Enlightenment (p. 7). While this is true, the Frankfurt School was no "solid crystal" and there were elements within the Institute that vigorously resisted this pessimistic turn (Scheuerman 1994). The dialectics project was attractive to Horkheimer because it held out the prospect of dissolving all but the core members (Horkheimer, Pollock, Adorno, Lowenthal, and Weil) [2] and living off the Institute's limited resources whereas the anti-Semitism project offered a large-scale, funded, empirical research agenda that continued the Institute's mandate to investigate the social psychology of the working class and the dynamics of authoritarianism. The anti-Semitism research stream was, I argue, the heart and soul of the Institute's critical social theory during this period. To abandon it would mean, essentially, the abandonment of critical theory itself: the interrogation of class, character, capitalism, and domination. But the trajectory of the inner circle was driven by contradictory forces, warping its relationship to the outside world including its treatment of peripheral members: the disintegration of the Popular Front; the fear of being ensnared in anti-communist harassments both real and imagined; financial stresses; [3] the group's ambivalent integration with Columbia University; external funding and constraints from Jewish defense organizations (e.g. AJC and the JLC); geographical separations; the moral imperative to assist European refugee scholars; and personal psychology. [4] Ultimately, the dialectics project took priority over much of the anti-Semitism research, including the labor study, to the detriment of critical sociology.

Dialectic of Enlightenment

Kellner calls Dialectic of Enlightenment "a genuine turning-point" whereby the Frankfurt School "abandoned the earlier program of interdisciplinary social theory and immanent critique" (1993:48; cf. Tar 1984:7) and critics have, over the years, bemoaned its incoherence and irrationality. Whereas Dialectic is famous for phrases such as "enlightenment is as totalitarian as any system" and "in the service of the present age, enlightenment becomes wholesale deception of the masses" ([1944/47] 1972:24, 42) the book is not without its substantive virtues and intriguing suggestions such as, to name only a few: (a) economic exchange and modern, industrial labor processes represent transfigured and extended analogs of the premodern ritual production of sacred forces; (b) the emergence of a politics of domination and exploitation with the mobility of the totemic emblem and the personification of mana; (c) anti-Semitism as a conscious tool in class warfare; (d) the symbol of the Jew as a condensed representation of capitalist excesses and a distorted representation of class relations and dynamics; and (e) anti-Semitic propaganda as an element in the organic composition of capital to exploit, further, the variable (social) limits of living labor, etc.

However, in the final analysis, Dialectic suffers immeasurably from reductionism, simple antisociology (witness

the clumsy deployment of the mana concept in chapter one where animism, naturism, and realism collapse into an undifferentiated heap), irresponsible sloganeering, and bewildering leaps across time and space that would have made the Poughkeepsie Seer blush. Ultimately, Dialectic did not prove to be a temporary detour for Horkheimer and some of his unpublished articles and lectures of the same period make its pessimism pale by comparison and are even more disturbing in their proposals for concrete action: for instance, Horkheimer's heretofore unexamined "Academy" article where he called for, essentially, an educational dictatorship of philosopher kings (Europe's "cream") to lord over the rabble. No, by the mid-1940s, like many former leftists, he was well on his way out of the critical theory business. [5] One problem, though, was that the Institute was populated by many who still held commitments to the left and to labor and it meant an eventual collision. If Dialectic was, as Kellner says, an intellectual "turning point" it also represented a rejection of political and ideological projects that would have made sense to labor communists and CIO radicals who pioneered the struggle against racism and injustice just ten years before. The Berkeley study, for example, was made liberal-friendly (and was still ruthlessly attacked upon publication) but the labor study was a different animal altogether, and rinsing the Marxism out of it would have been difficult if not altogether impossible; it appears that, from Horkheimer's position, it was preferable to rinse the Marxism out of the Institute itself.

The Closing of the Popular Front: Anti-Communism, and the Flight from Critical Theory

Virtually every scholar who has examined the wartime, organizational dynamics of the Institute has accounted for the ever-shrinking nature of the so-called inner circle on the basis of: (a) the growing philosophical pessimism of Horkheimer and his desire to exist in a state of "splendid isolation"; (b) the dwindling financial resources of the organization, necessitating an unloading of "ballast" such that Marcuse and Neumann, among others, were literally pushed away from the Institute and toward external sources of income, such as the O.S.S.; and (c) the inner circle's drift toward a theory of state capitalism, away from the stubborn orthodoxy of many of the peripheral members such as Neumann, Gurland, Massing, to name many.

I think these interpretations are true but incomplete, as they tend to emphasize intellectual and organizational aspects while neglecting the purely political. Horkheimer did grow increasingly pessimistic over time and he undoubtedly felt little dependency on an empirical data apparatus for the production of his abstract philosophy; from the research on authority and family to Dialectic he demonstrated a bewildering lack of contact with empirical evidence. And the move toward a theory of state capitalism was not merely arrived at through reasoned analysis but a response to the unrepentantly Marxian analyses coming out of the ISR's outer rings. Whatever the inner circle's stance toward communism, socialism, and Marxism had been prior to fleeing Germany, it seems obvious that, like many other former radicals, the core group arrived at a general rejection of radical thought and, more importantly, feared that the assorted research associates and assistants that populated the Institute (Massing, Gurland, Neumann, Kirchheimer, Marcuse) would literally drag them down into a political morass or worse, result in their deportation from the United States. Oddly enough, the threat may have been real to a certain extent.

The Institute became a domestic surveillance issue in July 1940[6] when Grossmann fell under suspicion of the authorities of Provincetown, Massachusetts of being a Nazi spy: "This man has been on Cape Cod for the past few days and has all kinds of data regarding the location of harbors. Most of the data has to do with Provincetown. It is believed that part of his identification is phoney [sic] and is being checked with Fifth Column activities..." (FBI MH). For the next year, off and on, the Institute was under investigation by the FBI, suspected of operating as German intelligence agents until, in the Fall of 1941, an informant at Columbia fingered Weil, Gurland, and Wittfogel as Soviet agents and characterized the Institute as a Comintern front organization. [7] In August 1943 Gumperz, the individual most responsible for getting the ISR to the United States and who negotiated the Institute's working relationship with Columbia University[8] was briefly arrested for taking photographs near a military installation on Long Island. Frank Fackenthal, Provost of Columbia University, vouched for Gumperz and the Institute, assuring the Bureau that the their outstanding features were, in the case of Gumperz, that he "spoke the German language" and, in the case of the Institute, that it generated "a lot of waste paper" (FBI MH). Whatever the real or imagined connections between Gumperz and Soviet intelligence, there were operatives working within the Institute.

It is widely known that Paul and Hede Massing were, at one time, Soviet intelligence agents. Paul, in his own accounts, claimed that he briefly assisted what he believed to be a Red Army intelligence unit in Europe and Hede became famous in the late 1940s for her role in the Alger Hiss/Whittaker Chambers/Noel Field affair—all of which

was recounted in her 1951 book This Deception. They both maintained, and to the best of my knowledge their claims have never been challenged, that they were out of the espionage business by 1938. Paul Massing's testimony in front of the House Un-American Activities Committee also portrayed the couple as out of the intelligence game by 1938. [9] But, as it turns out, their involvement went at least into the summer of 1944 (Weinstein and Vassiliev 2000:250). [10]

Hede ("Redhead"), Paul ("Vatsek"), and Franz Neumann ("Ruff"), all Institute associates or, in the case of Hede, wife of an associate and a temporary research assistant working on the labor study (employed at the AJC while Horkheimer was the research director), were all operatives within the "Redhead Group." [11] Additionally, Stephen Duggan, the father of famed Soviet spy Laurence Duggan, was a member of the ISR's advisory board and officer of the Emergency Committee that helped to fund some Institute salaries; the ISR, especially, Adorno was tainted by the unfolding of the high-profile Eisler affair—the FBI documented frequent telephone communications between Hanns Eisler and Adorno between December 1946 and March 1947 as Gerhart Eisler was under threat of deportation (see Wiggershaus 1994:389-91 for background); Pollock, Horkheimer, and Adorno were under suspicion of providing sympathy and material support for Ruth Fischer (one of the former leaders of the German KPD and sister to the Eisler brothers); and much to the chagrin of the director, Marcuse continued to tout a very orthodox, Party-approved tone as late as 1947. What did Horkheimer know and when did he know it? This is unclear but only the most naive interpreter could believe that Horkheimer wasn't sufficiently aware of, and frightened, by the stubborn radicalism within the Institute's ranks such that he felt compelled to either unload them or seal them off from the inner circle.

The purge trials of 1937 and 1938 marked the beginning of the end for the anti-fascist Popular Front—events that made it impossible for many fellow travelers to remain faithful in the Soviet experiment. And the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939 truly rocked the American Left resulting in a mass exodus of radicals and fellow travelers. A letter from Granville Hicks to Joseph Freeman, future research and editorial assistant for the Institute, was representative of the shock: "This is a very difficult letter for me to write. I have been deeply disturbed by the Soviet-German pact. There is no sense in my explaining what troubles me, for you and everybody else must know. The only thing that is necessary for me to say is that at the moment I find it utterly impossible to defend..." (GHb21f Freeman 1939-58). Of course, the pact of 1939 was short-lived and the Soviet Union was an official ally during the war but few returned to the fold and by the mid- 1940s the problem of political identity was acute. If Horkheimer wanted to keep a low profile[12] while in America, the Institute, literally abuzz with radicals, former radicals, suspected radicals, and recovering radicals,were definitely a source of potential problems and I think that this, as much as the problem of subjective propensities or philosophies, was an important factor in shrinking the inner circle and the desire for "splendid isolation."

These political tensions came to a head toward the end of 1944, right in the middle of the labor study fieldwork, when Massing and Gurland (the two principle authors of the study) appealed to Horkheimer for what they perceived to be Lowenthal's cowardly deviation from the Institute's program. The director blasted back on October 5th, in no uncertain terms, that, on the contrary, it was Massing and Gurland who were the deviants (LLbMSGer 185). [13] Likewise, the labor study itself had become a kind of deviant project; as the political horizon contracted, the labor study and kindred projects receded from sight. At the minimum, the labor study represented, arguably, a jewel in the Institute's crown, a landmark study that truly fused empirical research with theoretical development, and one that tied the ISR's American exile period to its earlier, milestone project on the Weimar proletariat and the work on authority and family. However, as fate would have it, the study would never see the light of day.

The Labor Antisemitism Study

A large-scale study of workers was familiar territory for the Institute. Between 1929 and 1931 the school had undertaken a pioneering study of the Weimar proletariat (finally published in 1984 as The Working Class in Weimar Germany). In his summary of the project, Smith (1998) states:

> The overall results were disturbing. On the one hand, for a fair number of left-wing respondents, there was "a far-reaching accord between personality and party program. These people wanted freedom, equality, and happiness for all: they hated war and sympathized with the oppressed. Their convictions and commitment were passionate and strong." This was Fromm's

> Revolutionärer group. Others, however, were Ambivalenter—and still others were largely authoritarian....For many German workers...there was a serious "discrepancy" between political beliefs and character....Careful sifting of the data yielded the conclusion that only 15 percent of the KPD and SPD members were genuinely radical personalities—while 25 percent were either potentially or primarily authoritarian. (Pp:68-69)

In other words, the German working class was emotionally unreliable and could not be counted on to repel an authoritarian onslaught. Yet this survey, as important as it was in not only the Institute's history but for the development of the empirical social sciences in general, was less a programmatic fulfillment of the Institute's multidisciplinary and critical agenda and more of a "good start." [14] The Weimar proletariat study reappeared in its sublated form as a moment within the massive and quasibrilliant Autorität und Familie report. But, here too, the 1936 publication (portions of which were translated into English and republished in 1937 under the partial auspices of the social science department at Columbia University) failed to deliver the promised integration of empirical data, multidisciplinary analysis, and theory formation; the theoretical contributions failed to establish a substantive connection with the empirical evidence in the rest of the study: "The fact that the theoretical drafts did not refer at any point to the questionnaire material or to the reports on research and literature dramatically illustrated the limited extent to which a 'fusion of constructive and empirical procedures' could be spoken of" (Wiggershaus 1994:151). Additionally, the problem of anti-Semitism had yet to materialize in the Institute's work as it would after the move to the United States. [15] One could cynically argue that the ISR only undertook the anti-Semitism project because of funding opportunities offered by organizations such as the AJC. Yet, I think this view would be overly simplistic. The Institute's earlier work on authoritarianism had failed precisely on the grounds that it could not sufficiently ground the problem in the larger dynamics of capitalist society. Only later did they come to comprehend the importance of "the Jew" for unraveling the hieroglyphics of bourgeois-liberal society [16].

Dubiel ([1978] 1985) claims that the labor anti-Semitism project was "conceived by Max Horkheimer" but it was actually Franz Neumann's idea (p. 195). Horkheimer, though he was excited about the overall program on anti-Semitism, was opposed to the labor study in particular and, as Wiggershaus indicates, felt that it was an unwarranted intrusion: "Horkheimer wanted, if possible, to drop the sub-project arranged by Neumann on anti-Semitism in the working class. He saw this as an unauthorized addition by Neumann to the draft of the project which had been published in SPSS. 'By the way,' he mentioned to Pollock, this idea of a survey on the whole of the labor movement, just to find some anti-Semitic reactions, is, in my opinion, scientifically ridiculous'" (Wiggershaus 1994:355). Besides, as Horkheimer stated in a November 8th, 1942 letter to Neumann, the labor study was pointless insofar as labor did not represent a "hot-bed" of anti-Semitic trouble (LLbMSGer185). Nonetheless, Neumann's idea was attractive to the AJC and the JLC who decided to fund the study.

The labor study examined three main areas of anti-Semitic hostility:

Area I. Supposed Jewish Personal Traits

- A. Clannishness
- B. Aggressiveness
- C. Sexuality (deviance)

Area II. Jewish Economic Practices

- A. Jews in business and Jewish control over business
- B. Jewish mercenary attitudes and money-mindedness
- C. Jews as anti-workers

Area III. Jews and Politics

- A. Jews have too much power
- B. Jews, education, and excess privilege
- C. Weak Jewish war effort

Here, I will briefly examine a few dimensions of "Area II": supposedly Jewish Economic Practices followed by a summary of all three "Areas." [17]

The authors of the labor report were Gurland (Part One and Two), Massing (Part Three and Six), Lowenthal (Part Four), and Pollock (Part 5). For now I will not concern myself with the fourth or fifth parts. Lowenthal's

portion was published in a completely rewritten form in 1987 and Pollock's contribution dealt only with labor leaders and union officials. The central parts of the report were those sections authored by Gurland and Massing who, combined, were responsible for exactly 75% of the completed report. [18]

The findings of the labor project were, on the surface at least, horrifying and dramatically undermined Horkheimer's earlier assumptions regarding labor prejudice. The ISR found that the interviewed workers possessed zero capacity for radical thought and, much to their surprise, discovered that roughly 21% of the workers were extreme authoritarians and virtually Nazi sympathizers (10.6% were classified as "exterminatory" and another 10.2% felt "intense hatred" for Jews but fell short of openly calling for the extermination of Jews). Ultimately, one half of the workers (566 AFL, CIO, and unorganized workers interviewed in New York, Los Angeles, Detroit, and Philadelphia) were debilitated to one extent or another by anti-Semitic beliefs. In the view of the ISR, anti-Semitism represented, as they called it, the "spearhead of fascism" and they wanted to know if the vaunted CIO was ready to repel authoritarianism on the domestic front. The answer appeared to be an unqualified "no" but, upon further analysis, the issue was not so cut-and-dry.

Gurland and Massing found deep variations along ethnic, educational, gender, and religious lines. Their ideal typical anti-Semite was:

> Male; 50 or older; Italian; Catholic (infrequent church attendance); possessing less than a high school education; a menial laborer—at the bottom of the job ladder, low occupational status; and had not been "Americanized" (i.e. had not been transformed by the American experience due his or his family's recent arrival in the States).

Their worker who was ideal typically resistant to anti-Semitism was quite different:

> Female; in her 20s; descended from White, Protestant, Northern European stock; either actively Protestant or nonreligious; possessing either a high school degree or some college experience; and was fully "Americanized."

They also found that white-collar workers were "amazingly liberal" in contrast to their European counterparts. Blacks and Hispanics also emerged from the study as being relatively free from the worst kinds of anti-Semitism. The labor report postulated that the future of American labor was heading, decisively, away from authoritarian ideology and that important segments of the working class were resistant or allergic to anti-Semitism.

The research was scheduled to be published along with its sister project that culminated in The Authoritarian Personality but it was shelved instead (Adorno et al.1950; see Jay [1973] 1996:225). (The only publication that bore any relation to the labor study was the little foam bubble Labor's Enemy: Anti-Semitism (1945) by Charles Sherman of the JLC that does not warrant further analysis here. In Martin Jay's (1996) classic history of the Institute, Pollock is relied upon to make the following assertion: "the conclusions of the study were so damaging to American labor that the Institut, with its characteristic caution, was hesitant about broadcasting its findings" (p. 225). However, it was not really the case that the labor study would have been the wrong book at the wrong time in the broadest terms, but, rather, the report's findings dramatically challenged the assumptions of Horkheimer's dialectics project and even undercut some of the theoretical inconsistencies of the Berkley study. While mildly damaging to labor, at least in a superficial ways, it represented a far greater threat to the bourgeoning anti-dialectical pessimism of Horkheimer and his inner circle, which was quickly jettisoning their Marxist baggage. In short, Gurland and Massing delivered solid, critical, sociological interpretations of their data grounded directly in the logic of capital accumulation and life in capitalist society whereas Horkheimer and Adorno weaved erratically between abstract philosophy and orthodox group psychology.

Gurland was responsible for exploring the anti-Semitic hatred of supposedly characteristic Jewish commercial and business practices. His interpretations clearly avoided the type of frequent reductionism found in Dialectic where Horkheimer and Adorno report that, among other things, "The penetrating and distant gaze, the hypnotic and the disinterested look, are of the same type; in both cases the subject is extinguished. Because such gazes lack reflection, those who do not think are electrified by them" (1945:191). One cannot "think with" or "through" such notions as they represent the negation of social theory in general, as Horkheimer and Adorno themselves admitted: they closed out the chapter on anti-Semitism by claiming that "contemporary anti-Semitism...[is] impenetrable [and] meaningless...The Jewish go-between is turned into a devilish character after he ceases to exist in the economy" (1945:206). "Devilish character" aside, these kinds of conclusions were incommensurate with the findings of the "other" Frankfurt School and, really, mind-bogglingly stupid. But rather than rehashing the line of thinking found in Dialectic let us explore, and think through, the kind of reasoning delivered up by Gurland and Massing in the labor

report.

The most elementary answer to worker resentment toward "Jewish" business practices, resided, according to Gurland, in the fact that "Perfectly normal business procedures appear as illegitimate because they strikingly differ from those which regulate the sale of the worker's labor power" (AL:367). Simply put, buying and selling bread and milk at the corner shop (before or after work) deviated from the logic of buying and selling of human time and energy (during work). It is worth quoting at length here:

> The worker is not in a position to overcharge anyone, especially not his customer, the employer to whom he sells his hands. Logically he resents those who overcharge him. He feels victimized by the storekeeper. He knows when he looks for a job or has accepted work he cannot change the price of what he has to sell, his labor power. Neither can he substitute a cheaper brand for his particular merchandise. Wage rates, efficiency standards, piece rates usually are fixed under contract for a definite length of time. There is no collective bargaining to negotiate a contract with the retailer.
>
> With the employer who buys his labor power the worker deals collectively. With the storekeeper from whom he buys the necessities of life he has to deal as an individual. His wage problem is taken care of by the union, the collective representation of his interests as a seller. His shopping problem is not taken care of by anyone....
>
> It has been shown before that the Jew as a rule is being identified as a retailer, merchant, [and] storekeeper. Now, this "trader" cheats the worker out of what he has earned through hard work in the factory or plant. The easiest conclusion is that the Jew is dishonest and has to be considered the principal enemy of the worker. (AL:366-67)

The "Jewish" store owner represented "an evil outgrowth of a system which he does not suspect of normally, constantly and legitimately employing such procedures for coordinating market operations" (AL:366). In short, we find that worker anti-Semitism was less about chafing against capitalist alienation and exploitation in the abstract sense and more about the abhorrence of contingent alienation and the impenetrable mystery of the value-price relation. The "Jew" marked not merely exploitation but random, arbitrary, and unverifiable (if "intuited") exploitation. Workers were willing to be alienated as long as the system promised the appearance of fixed, routine, and non-random operations (even though it is obvious that the capitalist mode of production is defined by its exploitation of variable capital that is, labor power, and punctuated by periodic ruptures, or better, the periodic destruction of routines and fixed order. The "Jewish" store owner was a metaphor for the abyss of contingency (the market where "anything goes") where the disorder of capitalism offered regulated islands in time and space where workers could cling to the fiction of self-determination and autonomy. New Deal "sops and lures" really were psychological miracles for workers unable to conceptually seize hold of class relations and ripe for antisemitic propaganda due to their limited and contradictory nature—"the Jew" appears in the very limits of the various New Deal programs:

> The situation is felt particularly strongly because the worker's attention is centered on how he spends his weekly pay much more than on what his pay is. Through the last ten years wage standards have considerably improved under the codes of the early New Deal, under collective bargaining, under the Wagner Act with its provisions on union recognition and mediation. Improvement of wage rates has eased to be the worker's individual affair. As for prices and bargains, they still are the workers individual, personal affair. He cannot rely on any organization to help him settle these everyday problems (ibid.).

Can we say that anti-Semitic workers were hostile to capitalism? I think the matter is better grasped as Ambivalenz: simultaneously attractive and repellant, a thing of awe, wonder, love, hate, disgust, and horror. Workers prone to anti-Semitism were, I think, willing to set aside their selves to acquire order and regulation where, relations where personal responsibility is lifted and assumed by higher authority, and where burdens are universally shared (the "rewards" of alienation qua recognition, normality, counting, in short, to make a normal appearance in the social/public realm). For the anti-Semitic worker, it was precisely the abnormal, excess, and lack that needed to be eliminated.

Higher prices for goods were not a problem as much as the lack of uniformity of prices and the ability to cheat the system, to wheel and deal, buying and selling on the black market (i.e., the realm of the Jewish). The "Jew" signified the cracks in the system, exceptions to rules, and disorder on the margins of apparent order. In a way, the "Jew" marked the refutation to systematic alienation and exploitation whereby the individual could circumvent or short-circuit the normal operations of the system. And, clearly, it was both the resentment of that ability to short-circuit the system and the simultaneous desire to short-circuit the system. At the same time, though, the hatred of the Jew was a confused recognition that the normal operations of the labor contract were set up to cheat workers:

> He is skeptical with respect to price enforcement by government agencies because he thinks OPA officials are either lazy bureaucrats who live on his, the taxpayer's money or shyster lawyers who represent the interests of those whom they ought to

be watching all the time. His attitude to rationing and price control is dictated by the idea that dealing with his storekeeper individually, on a personal basis, he would fare better. In practice, he constantly encourages the "unethical" procedures of which he complains (ibid.).

We can say that anti-Semitism is so complex and contradictory because social processes and institutions are complex and contradictory. The spectral Jew and the chain of signifiers that orbit around the Jewish nucleus are tantalizing if ridiculous ways of thinking about society and social contradictions. In the mind of the anti-Semite it is the other way around. Social processes and institutions, in all their bewildering complexities, are merely instances of the Jew and "the Jew" was not an explanation of inexplicable supernatural events or mysteries. On the contrary, "the Jew" was the personification of structures and processes that seemed perfectly obvious to the anti-Semite. Whereas Horkheimer and Adorno simply threw up their hands and declared that the phenomenon was an impenetrable mystery, Gurland (here, just a couple of pages of the labor report were quoted for example) theorized, and allows us to theorize with him, the riddle of the value-price dialectic, the foundational and socially constitutive nature of alienation, the buying and selling of labor power, and commodity fetishism.

Some of the major themes and findings of the ISR's labor report and some of the main interpretations (in respect to all three areas) are as follows:

- The anti-Semitic response to Jewish "clannishness" revealed something about the authoritarian ambivalence toward solidarity and collective relations. Anti-Semitic workers were less anticollective or antigroup per se than they were opposed to democratic and plastic forms of cohesion and identification. Supposed clannishness was in a sense a way for workers to beat down a (positive) relationship of spontaneity and latitude and to erect, in its place, an ideal of hierarchy and static placement within a stable, durable, predictable social order under the sign of the legitimate leader. For the authoritarian, life "inside" the group was one of obedience and alienation whereas life "outside" the group was mere contingency. One prevented the descent into chaos by ritually and vigilantly maintaining rigid order within the group. Once depersonalization was allowed to dissolve within the group chaos was sure to creep in. For this reason "groups" were automatically suspect at some level: they were fine for nonvital activities but when it came to anything serious, group solidarity might not be strong enough to suppress the tendency to devolve into a breakdown of order and lose one's place within social organization.

- Jewish "aggressiveness" was, ironically, a way for anti-Semitic workers to attack Jews for their perceived unwillingness to submit to the dictates of collective life. Jews were, they felt, "too good" to be a part of the group. This individualism led them to be weak and vulnerable so they overcompensated by being aggressive toward others. So, for the authoritarian, there was safety in numbers—the "herd" (the gray, undifferentiated mass of workers, each in his or her place, under the watchful gaze of embodied power) provided cover and security. If one wanted security one had to sacrifice a good many things such as individual freedom. The anti-Semite's motto is: "will to power"—that self-conquering impulse infused with ascetic, expiation explored by Nietzsche (as well as Durkheim and Weber).

- Many aspects emerge from the "Jews in business" section: for one thing Jews represented frustrations and breakdowns in the normal flow of commodities such as rationed goods. Workers suspected that some groups had privileged connections and monopolized cigarettes and liquor. Secondly, Jews symbolized not exchange per se but the mysteries and excesses of exchange—especially the felt but incomprehensible divide between prices and exchange values. The "Jew" was a sign of divergences and contingent fluctuations in prices above and beyond values. Here, again, the Jew was "too much" or "not enough"—exploiters and undersellers. Hence, Jews controlled "all" stores and preferred loans and credit to hard, legitimate work. Jews, it was thought, willingly sought to operate on the margins of economic life as parasites who avoided hard work and who derived a perverse pleasure in getting something for nothing.

- Nearly 80% of anti-Semitic workers complained about the supposed "mercenary" spirit of Jews and this emphasis on profiteering served to focus and condense hostility into a more narrow conception of Jews in society. Here the "Jews as mercenaries" idea boiled things down to money and the various schemes Jews concocted to extract money from non-Jews. The schemes ran the gamut from simple and petty rip offs to manipulating the government, markets, and orchestrating the entire war. It was with the notion of profiteering and mercenary spirit that the "everything" of anti-Semitism was able to establish a gravitational center around money—or, really, excess money. When workers were able to identify the profiteering motives of Jews they were capable of retroactively recasting all Jewish activities and even personal traits such as clannishness and filth as means and secondary formations around the rapacious and "stop short of nothing" mentality of the imaginary Jew. Literally, the formula for much of the Jewish relation to money (in chapter four) was: "Jews running around Washington cashing in on the war."

- The "Jew as worker" was an exceedingly complex problem and pointed to many aspects of workers and their relation to authority, work, the buying and selling of labor power, the split between prices and values, the value-form that their labor power assumed, the nature of the labor process, the normative aspects of work intensity and the implied worker "code" that determined their stance toward making demands against capital for more of a share of the surplus. Jews

were seen as a corruption of the imaginary, unmediated relation between the worker and the entitled boss who stood in the reflected glory of and received legitimation from the myth of the genius entrepreneur. The Jew was an alien intruder that degraded the dignity of the skilled (and unskilled) worker who knew and respected his or her "place" within the hierarchic work order. Jews were felt, by anti-Semites, to be biologically incapable of real work and, if they were found on the shop floor, were "slumming" to avoid the draft. In other words, Jews were essentially identical to "buying and selling" (junk, liquor, cigarettes, cheap clothes, etc.) but they were incapable of merely selling (i.e., being the individual possessing only one commodity to sell: labor power).

- Jews were felt by many anti-Semitic workers to have an unnatural and perverse relationship toward power: they wanted it all for themselves rather than share it. Of course, for the anti-Semite, their desire was generally to see Jews divested of all power and redistributed, presumably, back into the world of non-Jews. But, we must observe, here, that the data did not generally support any widespread belief that Jews were the demonological masters of the universe; "the Jew" was not quite the key to all the mysteries of the cosmos in the way it was in European and Nazi propaganda. However, anti-Semitic workers still deployed a universalizing language of "all" and "every" when speaking of Jews. But it was not in the sense that Jews controlled all political power. In that case it was that Jews gravitated and migrated to Washington because that was where the soft jobs were. Jews could infiltrate government bureaus and boards to make life easier for themselves and other Jews (quite unlike the Nazi interpretation or the fantasies of contemporary right-wingers that see the Jews as part of a New World Order where the United Nations is but a screen for Jewish world domination. The notion, for example, of a Zionist Occupation Government (Z.O.G.) would have been quite unreal and unconvincing for most of the workers in the Institute's study. Jewish "power", quite simply, meant the control of business and banking. Though, it should be pointed out, some anti-Semitic workers thought that what Jews were able to achieve in Germany was something quite distinct from their power in America. Some were willing to believe that Jews really did represent a total social menace in Germany (hence, the necessity to exterminate them all) while simultaneously believing that Jews had limited powers in the United States. In a sense, many workers felt that America was simply bigger and stronger than the Jews and could resist the kind of effects that Jews had on Germany while others worried about the power of Jews to furrow deeper into American life and eventually gain the upper hand on non-Jews: what the Nazis did might have to be replicated in the United States!

- Jews were felt by anti-Semitic workers to have an unnatural affinity for education and intellectualization. Their "brain power" went with their inability, avoidance, and antipathy toward manual labor. Jews "had to" get more education because they could not do real work and Jews used education to make more money doing far less than real workers. Education was the best route to exploit others and make excessive money. Jews were seen as unnaturally overrepresented in the fields of medicine and law. They monopolized the field of necessities—the sick worker had to go see the Jew. The worker who got into a scrape with the law had to pay the Jew. In this way any time a worker moved beyond the parameters of work they entered the nefarious web of Jewish appropriation and exploitation.

- 30.7% of workers sampled were considered to be anti-Semitic by the ISR. Of that group 20.8% were effectively pro-fascist or virtual Nazi sympathizers. As bad as that sounds on the surface the data was less damning and gloomy than it appeared.

- There was a nearly 10% difference between workers in the AFL and the CIO with the latter being somewhat less prone to anti-Semitism. That difference was probably greater and more important when it came to the decisive question five that sought to locate the levels of violent worker hostility toward Jews and identifying with the Nazi program of extermination.

- Gender was an important variable in worker anti-Semitism of the most violent type. Only twelve women were sympathetic to the Nazi program of exterminating Jews. But when it came to less extreme and violent solutions (in response to the decisive question number five) women were not significantly different than their male counterparts.

- Young workers (up to age twenty-five) were very much less prone to anti-Semitism as their older counterparts. Only 3.5% of workers in this category condoned Nazi terror against Jews.

- Education had an important effect on decreasing violent anti-Semitism. Workers with only a grammar school education were almost three times more likely to identify with the Nazi plan to cleanse the world of Jews. And, interestingly, a high school diploma was virtually as good as college experience or a college diploma in reducing violent anti-Semitism. The major exception to this rule was among workers over the age of 50 with higher educations.

- Catholics were more likely than Protestants to embrace Nazi terror and it appeared that Catholics needed frequent church attendance more than Protestants to check their violent impulses toward Jews.

- "Nonreligious" workers were very similar to Protestant workers when it came to violent anti-Semitism.

- "Americanization" (the effect of American society on second and third generation workers) contributed significantly to decreasing hostility toward Jews.

- Nationality or national origins was not a tremendously decisive variable in determining levels of violent antisemitism except in the case of workers with Scandinavian backgrounds. They were much less likely to identify with Nazi measures and workers with roots in Mexico were the most likely to identify with the total rejection of Nazi extermination. But generally, no nationality was exempt.

- The wages paid to a worker had little effect on their level of anti-Semitism. Higher wages did not reduce hostility toward Jews nor did low wages increase hostility.

- The difference between skilled and unskilled workers was not significant in reducing anti-Semitism.

- Occupational status did have a strong effect on anti-Semitism. Unlike the European context, American white-collar, professional, and clerical workers were much less likely to succumb to hatred of Jews. The Institute concluded that they were "resistant" and had "amazingly liberal attitudes" compared to their European and blue collar counterparts.

Conclusion

Slater argues that what Horkheimer and Adorno were up to during this period represented a "degeneration" of theory due to its lack of connection to capital accumulation (1977:87). But this was not true of the Institute as a whole. The kind of work being undertaken by the "Other Frankfurt School" (the "dispersed forces" as Massing once jokingly put it) represented the antithesis of Horkheimer's antidialectics. Gurland, Massing, and company were, by contrast, working out the problems of anti-Semitism and fascism all the way from the molecular level of lived experience in a commodity world up to the institutional forms of capitalist society. That they persevered and produced a massive, brilliant, nuanced, and multidimensional research report while combating both the growing irrationalism of the Horkheimer Circle and the inherent conservatism of their benefactors at the AJC is a testament to the power of moral seriousness and even optimism required of critical theory. "In 1935, Horkheimer asserted (and acknowledged) that the value of theory 'depends on its relation to praxis'. The socio-political consequence of this relation was that an adequate social theory had to be linked to the existing revolutionary forces within society..." (Slater 1977:15).

Upon arriving in the United States the Institute established a genuinely furious research pace and generated volume upon volume of analysis and findings rooted in solid empirical inquiry. If, as Habermas (1984) says, "Resignation had already set in by 1941" , by the mid-40s the Institute's theoretical perspective had become so contradictory, pessimistic, and irrational, that for all intents and purposes, critical theory collapsed (p. 64). "In 1946 the Institute had cut its links with Columbia University, at the very moment Columbia had wanted to intensify them at the end of the war." By 1947 the Anti-Semitism Project began to crumble and Horkheimer resigned from his position as research consultant at the American Jewish Committee; by 1948 the very concept of capitalism began to vanish from Horkheimer's vocabulary (Wiggershaus 1994:397-402). The last convulsion of the overall anti-Semitism program was the 1950 publication of The Authoritarian Personality. And that was that. Horkheimer and Adorno packed up and left for Germany.

During the 1960s and 1970s the work of the ISR was rediscovered by the New Left and campus radicals. But what was recovered as the "Frankfurt School" was but a one-sided caricature of the Institute. They had been deeply involved in studying the working classes but many American radicals had, as far back as the 1930s, been trying to replace "the workers" with "the people" or some other post-Marxist notion and the New Left was, in the words of Howard Zinn, a "loose amalgam of civil rights activists, Black Power advocates, ghetto organizers, student rebels, Vietnam protestors..." that had a lot more than the "working class" on its mind (quoted in Stolz 1971:36). Plus, the core research problems of the Frankfurt School were not carried over by the New Left. For example, the ISR's recurring analyses of anti-Semitism, what Zizek (2000) calls their "permanent obsession" was basically lost because, at least in the social sciences, the study of anti-Semitism had only a spectral existence (p. 157). With notable exceptions, on the few occasions that academic sociology has grappled with the problem it has done little more than embarrass itself. In short, the social science aspect of critical theory was left to rot as English departments and philosophy students transformed critical theory into a chic but disembodied discourse on instrumental rationality. Consequently, the ISR's profile was reconstituted within New Left belles-lettres as a slick if thorny rumination on the dialectics of reason that had, as Zizek (2000) puts it, the effect of "a fateful shift from concrete socio-political analysis to philosophico-anthropological generalisation, the shift by means of which the reifying 'instrumental reason' is no longer grounded in concrete capitalist social relations..." (p. 156).

Endnotes

1. In the Institute's "Report on its History, Aims and Activities, 1933-1938" it is stated that "Even at the cost of reducing its own scientific activity, the Institute set aside considerable funds to help these people continue their work and thereby their intellectual existence. These funds were not given out as mere charity, but as grants for specific projects and studies. Not a few scientific works of émigré scholars have been completed and published thanks to this assistance, and valuable contributions in the tradition of German thought have thus been saved. Many of these studies were published in the cooperative volume Autorität und Familie or in the Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung. In other cases the Institute contributed to publication costs. Over 50 stipends, many of them running over a period of years, have been granted for that purpose since 1933" (1938:17).

2. Felix Weil, the man with the money, also had his own Latin American Economic Institute that shared offices with the ISR in New York City. The LAEI had a secretary of its own, letterhead, and released a few publications. The "inner circle" was constantly in flux as Horkheimer and Pollock sought to shed members deemed burdensome. Ultimately, of course, Lowenthal was also deemed expendable. By the mid 1940s Fromm was no longer employed as well as scorned for his revisionism (and perhaps his popularity); Marcuse "constantly in touch with Horkheimer...was held at a distance"; and Neumann, Grossmann, Kirchheimer, and Wittfogel, to varying degrees, simply evaporated from the scene over time, finding academic and government jobs (Wiggershaus 1994:383).

3. The ISR is commonly portrayed as (a) the cash-strapped organization needing to shed excess weight to stay afloat or (b) the charitable organization extending a lifeline to exile scholars. There is a truth to both of these accounts but there were funds coming into the Institute, and not just from the AJC, that worked in several directions to complicate the story. The Emergency Committee In Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars and, to a lesser extent, the Oberlaender Trust, both assisted the Institute's payroll. The Emergency Committee made grants on the condition that the recipients were also supported by the Institute such that their annual salaries equaled $4000. Marcuse, for example, was already being paid $4200 in 1940 so the Institute cut his salary in order to secure the additional, external funding. Other grants were awarded to Kirchheimer (four times), Neumann (twice), Massing (twice), Max Beck, and Zilsel. The Trust also awarded grants to Institute associates Max Beck and Ernst Bloch and former and future associates such as Kapp and Karsen. Kirchheimer was awarded $960 by the Trust in 1940 (Worrell 2003, Appendix K; EC Series I, b24).

4. Equally important problems were Horkheimer's flight into orthodox psychoanalytic theory and the ISR's growing affinity for biological reductionism. These problems have been examined already by David Norman Smith (1992). Moreover, there was a growing "entrepreneurial" posture vis-à-vis Institute members such that many of the people who breathed vitality into the empirical research streams of the Institute were subjected to a pioneering form of flexible labor practices that combined insecurity, contingent and short-term contracts, and paternalistic emotional manipulation. Wiggershaus (1994) sufficiently draws out these aspects. Marcuse was perhaps the ideal-typical case. Horkheimer led Marcuse along: cutting his wages, dictating his place of residence, pushing him toward employment outside the Institute, while simultaneously leading him to believe that his future was at Horkheimer's side in the Institute (Wiggershaus 1994).

5. Even though the Institute's core members were not sympathetic to the Fourth International, the Horkheimer political odyssey was not dissimilar to that of, say, the Alcove One crowd at City University who made the improbable journey from Trotsky to Nixon. For Horkheimer's attitude toward the German antiwar movement and Vietnam see Wiggershaus (1994:624-25).

6. Actually, Paul Massing, the on-again, off-again Institute associate, was as far as I know the first to come under scrutiny during March 1940 when the FBI received information that Massing was moving near a Pennsylvania shipyard for possible espionage and sabotage work as a Nazi agent. The file was closed but reopened in 1942 when both Paul and his wife Hede were (correctly) identified as GPU agents.

7. The Columbia informant was used as a tool in the ongoing war between Robert MacIver and Robert Lynd. On the struggle between MacIver and Lynd, and the situation of the ISR within that conflict, see Wheatland (2004b:76-78). The FBI informant, an individual possessing a working knowledge of the Institute, was listed in the FBI's files as one "Robert M"—historians would no doubt pay a king's ransom to know the identity of this person.

8. On the role of Gumperz in helping the Institute to relocate to the U.S. and his manipulation by Horkheimer see Wheatland (2004a).

9. NA, HUAC Executive Session Testimony, September 21, 1948, Massing, 9E3/5/22/1, Box 7.

10. By November 1942 the FBI considered Paul and Hede Massing to be "connected with the Russian Terror Apparatus of the GPU.... the Massings, although reported to have broken with the Comintern are not believed by the source of information to have severed actually their connections with the GPU" (FBI HM, 65-396 1bh).

11. The "Red Head Group" was not limited to these three people but the story goes beyond the scope of

the present discussion. I explore the issue further in my article "Joseph Freeman and the Frankfurt School." This information, except for Paul Massing's code name, is contained in Weinstein and Vassiliev (2000) and is based on recently opened archives of the KGB and the National Security Agency's declassified files pertaining to the Venona Program carried out by the U.S. Army's Signal Intelligence Service from 1943 until 1980 (http://www.nsa.gov/venona); Vassiliev's notes on a 1948 memo by Anatoly Gorsky on compromised agents and spy networks in America; and the Library of Congress, cold war, anticommunist historian John Haynes.

12. And Horkheimer was not keeping a very low profile: he was trailed by the FBI on an auto trip to Los Angeles and his telegrams to the Institute were intercepted and subjected to futile decryption efforts by American intelligence.

13. More than a decade later, Gurland, then on the edge of destitution working as a freelance translator and ghostwriter in New York, would continue to feel Horkheimer's animosity. While attempting to secure a university position in Germany, Gurland sought letters of support from his former associates at the Institute but, whereas "Teddy had been more than willing to oblige...Maaax [sic] had put his foot down—for 'political' reasons" (OK, letter from Gurland to Kirchheimer dated April 1, 1958).

14. For more on the Weimar proletariat study, as well as related efforts such as the Marienthal study conducted by Jahoda, Lazarsfeld, and Zeisel (2002), see Smith (1998) and Worrell (2003).

15. Bahr (1984) has criticized the Institute's work on anti-Semitism and declared that its Critical Theory was a failure. Bahr, though, paints with broad strokes and claims that substantive borrowings from the labor study and the Berkeley group found their way into Dialectic of Enlightenment. Anyone who has read both the labor report and Adorno's chapters in Authoritarian Personality will be hard pressed to recognize more than a fleeting family resemblance.

16. See Jay (1980) for some insight into the emerging importance of anti-Semitism for the Institute's work. It should be noted, though, that Jay falls prey to received wisdom when he claims that "In their faithfulness to Marx's own attitude towards anti-Semitism, Horkheimer and his colleagues conformed to a pattern that many observers have noted: the more radical the Marxist, the less interested in the specificity of the Jewish question" (p. 138). In fact, the overwhelming majority of work done on anti-Semitism was performed by the most radical members of the Institute.

17. For a complete summary and analysis of the project's data and methods see Worrell (2003).

18. Martin Jay reports that the document delivered to the JLC in 1944 was 1300 pages in length ([1973] 1996:225) when in fact it was exactly 1449 pages in length and delivered in 1945. Jay also says that "After allowing the study to lie fallow for several years, renewed efforts were made in 1949. Paul Lazarsfeld and Allen Barton were recruited to write a methodological introduction" (ibid.). Actually, the report was handed over to Lazarsfeld's Bureau in 1947 and it was Seymour Fiddle who was tasked with writing a large summary and analysis of the entire project that is, in itself, very interesting and insightful. Unfortunately, the Fiddle report is beyond the scope of the present discussion except to say that it probably confirmed in Horkheimer's mind the fact that the sharp, critical edge of the report could not be blunted into inert liberal jargon. Jay claims that the findings of the labor report were made redundant by the Studies in Prejudice series (ibid.). This strikes me as incorrect. Indeed, the findings were unlike anything else the Institute produced and was the only project that could make an obvious claim to its neo-Marxist heritage. Jay claims that the labor study's methods were "primitive" compared "to the achievements of the various volume in the Studies in Prejudice" series (ibid.). This is very far from the truth. The project's methods were, in fact, groundbreaking and would serve sociologists well as a model to emulate (see Worrell 2003, Appendix D for a full analysis of the labor study methods). Jay claims that the labor study found that "More than half the workers surveyed had shown anti-Semitic bias of one sort or another..." (ibid.). The results were such that exactly half, not more not less, were afflicted by anti-Semitic feelings. Jay also perpetuates the myth that the labor project was a kind of precursor or "testing ground" to "latter studies" such as the Berkley project (op cit, p. 226). In fact, the labor study began two weeks after the Authoritarian Personality project; it was not a "testing ground" but the sister study.

Abbreviations

AL	"Anti-Semitism among American Labor, 1944-45" (Unpublished report by the Institute of Social Research)
"b/f"	Archival box and folder numbers
BW	Bertram Wolfe Papers
EC	Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars

FBI HE	Federal Bureau of Investigation, Freedom of Information/Privacy Acts Section, Hanns Eisler Files
FBI HM	Federal Bureau of Investigation, Freedom of Information/Privacy Acts Section, Hede Massing Files
FBI MH	Federal Bureau of Investigation, Freedom of Information/Privacy Acts Section, Max Horkheimer Files
GH	Granville Hicks Papers, Syracuse University
ISR	Institute of Social Research
JF	Joseph Freeman Collection, Hoover Institute, Stanford University
JLC	Jewish Labor Committee
LL	Leo Lowenthal Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University
NA	National Archives
NYPL	New York Public Library
NYT	New York Times
OK	Otto Kirchheimer Papers
PH	Powers Hapgood Papers, Indiana University
RB	Roger Baldwin Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University Library
USP	Upton Sinclair Papers, Indiana University

Archival Sources, Libraries, and Special Collections

Bertram Wolfe Collection, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University
Bureau of Applied Social Research Archive, Columbia University
Cleveland Public Library
Edward Earle Collection, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University Library
Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice, Washington, D.C., (Freedom of Information Section).
Hanns Eisler Collection, Specialized Libraries and Archival Collections, Doheny Memorial Library, University of Southern California
Papers of the Emergency Committee for Displaced Foreign Scholars, Manuscripts and Archives Division, Humanities and Social Sciences Library, New York Public Library
Louis and Markoosha Fischer Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University Library
Ruth Fischer Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University
Joseph Freeman Collection, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University
Mike Gold Papers, Labadie Collection, University Library, University of Michigan
Granville Hicks Papers, Department of Special Collections, Syracuse University Library
Powers Hapgood Papers, Manuscripts Department, Lilly Library, Indiana University
Institute of Pacific Relations Collection, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University
Horkheimer-Pollock Archives, Stadt Frankfurt am Main, Stadt und Universitatsbibliothek Frankfurt, Germany
The Kansas Collection, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas
Otto Kirchheimer Papers, State University of New York, Albany
Karl Korsch Papers, International Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, Amsterdam the Netherlands
Leo Lowenthal Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University
National Archives, Records of the U.S. House of Representatives Record Group 233 House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC
Henry Pachter Papers, State University of New York, Albany
Upton Sinclair Papers, Manuscripts Department, Lilly Library, Indiana University
Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University

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Disagreeing Preemptive/Prophylaxis: From Philip K. Dick to Jacques Ranciere

Irving Goh

1.

> We know that there are many thousands or hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants and if they're challenged by the police, they're not going to stand there and produce their ID, they obviously will try and run. [...] And whilst we need to catch those illegal immigrants or asylum seekers, nevertheless we can't shoot them because they're not terrorists.
> —Labor Peer Lord Ahmed in "U.K. Muslims Feel 'Under Suspicion'"
> BBC News. 25 July 2005

> Everybody runs.
> —Minority Report, dir Spielberg, 2002

In the world of Philip K. Dick's Minority Report (1956), a world that is also replicated in Steven Spielberg's film adaptation (2002), crime prevention approaches its absolute perfectibility. To free the world of crime, the solution has been but to preemptively arrest the criminal-to-be so that the crime-to-come will not arrive, sometimes even prior to the criminal-to-be premeditating his or her crime-to-come. That is the operational objective of "precrime" in the world of Minority Report. But the history or memory of crime is not at all erased in that world. The world remains mindful of the concept of crime through the mark of a prison architecture, a "detention camp full of would-be criminals" (Dick 1997:324). Instead of the disappearance of prison culture in this futuristic world, a total prison for those who essentially have not (yet) committed a crime has to be exchanged for the world of crime-prevention perfectibility. The "detention camp full of would-be criminals" marks out a space in the world that is the remainder of the preemptive act of "precrime." [1]

There is no conventional methodology to the exceptional practice of "precrime." Something monstrous, something more or less human, has to intervene to bring about this perfectibility of noncrime. In Minority Report, it is the "precogs" that one looks to. Spielberg depicts these "precogs" as beings of higher human intelligence. But the original text refers to them rather as "deformed and retarded" (1997:325). The dreams of the "precogs" are always haunted by images of future violence. And a machine is plugged into the dream-works of the "precogs" to sieve out the respective names of the prospective victim and the criminal-to-be, and to reproduce the images of the crime-scene as dreamed out by the "precogs," which are all fragmentary and in disjunctive order of course, like in most dream-works. The intelligent work of interpreting these images, of deciding the order of the images, and analyzing the exact location of the crime scene through geographical memory, remains the reserve of the human. In the text proper, behind the machine is always Wally Page—the subordinate of the narrative's protagonist John Anderton—who has the "big responsibility" of using his subjective "judgment" to determine which names and their corresponding images of crime sequences constitute major crimes-to-come (1997:326). In Spielberg's filmic retelling, he has John Anderton himself commanding that scene of human interpretation, a scene that already presupposes a judgment that a crime will take place and that the criminal-to-be will be a perpetrator of violence, a scene that plays to the cool refrain of Schubert's 8th symphony, which is also known as the unfinished.

Fifty years after the text of Minority Report, the spirit of the preemptive is no longer confined to the world of fiction (or film—as in the case of Spielberg's adaptation, which is set in 2054 and therefore in turn slightly less than fifty years from now). The shadow of the preemptive shrouds the real world today. It is the spirit that haunts the world today, conjured up in the work of mourning by military and police measures to exorcise its trauma of the surprise of terror of 9/11. The preemptive is becoming the contemporary global condition for global security. Its global dissemination follows from the post-9/11 American directive of a preemptive military strike against any territory that either deviates from the dictates of the American-led "war on terror," or presents itself as a possible state of terror or a state that will disseminate terror to other territories that have aligned themselves with the American political-economic-military complex. In 2005, the preemptive condition has but only reaffirmed itself in civil space in London, in which the police condition of "shoot-to-kill" is reiterated decisively not with one but seven bullets into the head (and another into the shoulder) of a migrant, delivered in a terrifying and traumatic spectacle visible to the London tube commuters at that time, just because he (supposedly) ran and because he just kept silent/silence.

And just as the world of crime prevention perfectibility through the preemptive is not detached from the indelible presence of a prison world in Minority Report, we witness the refusal of the fortress of Guantanamo—that detention camp par excellence of largely undocumented and suspect military handling of its captives that simply goes against the good sense of human rights and democracy—to be conjured away. In the face of the imminent normalization of the preemptive, the critical question one should pose to it could perhaps take its cue from the above-mentioned scene of interpretation in Spielberg's adaptation of Minority Report, specifically the use of the particular soundtrack. What remains "unfinished" in the speed of a preemptive, notwithstanding the fact that there will be times when in the preemptive, a crime, or a terrifying surprise of violence, is short-circuited and the intended injury to the innocent leaves unexecuted for good? In this paper, I would like to argue that it is the thinking of the right to be alive— without conditions—that is violently precluded in the act of the preemptive. Under the preemptive, the right to be alive risks its disappearance. And once the preemptive is on its way, one is seldom able to think outside of it to think of another possible (less violent) solution or a different outcome. To maintain a thought of an unconditional right to be alive, one has to get outside of the preemptive. Or according to John Anderton in Minority Report, one has to "keep [one]self outside" (1997:334) in order to save one's own life against the preemptive. For the right to be alive, one has to get outside the normalization of it, or more urgently, get the idée fixe of the preemptive outside the procedures of normalization (without reserving it as an exceptional power on the side of the State and the law either), in order to secure a counterprophylaxis against the deadly preemptive. One way of getting outside is to project a force of what the French philosopher Jacques Rancière calls mésentente or "disagreement" to dispute the breakneck rush of the preemptive as the normative condition of global peace and security.

2.

> **...there is no human right more sacred than the right to be alive. Without this human right all others are impossible.**
> **...protecting the human rights of others is also an inseparable part of realizing our wider foreign policy goals and of promoting our own security.**
> ***—Ian Pearson, 21 July 2005***

The right to be alive is a phrase uttered by U.K. Foreign Cabinet Office Minister Ian Pearson on the future imperative of life in a world visibly insecure of the threats of terror. But it arrives in an ironic time, arriving only hours before the preemptive London shooting—a police action that only deafened the right to be alive to an imminent disappearance, particularly the right to be alive of the innocent migrant. The chronology of the preemptive act coming after the enunciation only serves to suggest how little the chance of the right to be alive gets delivered and received in actuality in the looming shadow of the preemptive. The preemptive arrives at such great speed that in the chronology of events, it sends Pearson's utterance into a precession of meaninglessness. This deafening speed of the preemptive is echoed in another fatal case of the preemptive, this time in Miami in December 2005. This time, a bipolar man, onboard a plane, and who has forgotten to take his medication, hallucinates that he has a bomb in his backpack and makes a dash to get out of the aircraft. Air marshals immediately intervene. Meanwhile, the man's wife runs after her husband, at the same time shouting aloud her husband's medical condition. Witnesses onboard hear her, but somehow not the air marshals. The air marshals only see a risk of another terrorist threat. They are deaf to

any counter-hypothesis (i.e. the counterhypothesis that the man is not a terrorist). And so they preemptively take the man down with a series of bullets. Like the Brazilian in the London shooting, this man is innocent. There has been no bomb or threat of terrorism involved in the entire incident.

In the same speech of Pearson's in which the right to be alive is enunciated, Pearson also mentions other ways besides terrorism in which the right to be alive is taken away from life itself: "poverty, oppression, exploitation, and dictatorship." He has forgotten to add police action. Police preemptive action violently supplements that list. To be sure, there is no doubt that the phrase the right to be alive will continue to be reiterated again, re-amplified from the side of the State, in another situation, at another place. After all, according to Rancière, in contemporary democracy and its globalization, "We are effectively witnessing an active multiplying and redefining of rights, aimed at getting law, rights, the rule of law, and the legal ideal circulating throughout society, at adapting to and anticipating all the movements of society" (1999:111). But if the acceleration of the absolute preemptive gets its way, if that becomes the way of contemporary life, alongside the reiterations of the right to be alive, then it gets in the way of the right to be alive as a fact—as a fact of freedom of existence—and lets that fact slide into a logic of the simulacrum. According to Baudrillard, the simulacrum is what always needs to announce itself, always needs to amplify and reproduce its sign, in order to drown out the silent disappearance of the thing it seeks to articulate. As long as the preemptive is in place, as long as the preemptive is institutionally given a path of normalization, the right to be alive would slowly erode from being a given fact of freedom of any living being sharing the common space of the world to a condition only managed and decided from the side of either the military or police of the State.

How does one get outside the State's biopolitical capture of the right to be alive, in the face of an impending preemptive? Minority Report offers a possible trajectory (not without its own aporia) that allows one to get, or keep, outside the preemptive. There exists, in the world of Minority Report, a countermeasure against the preemptive act of "precrime." And this counterpreemptive potentiality is lodged in the "minority report" of a "precog" who sees a different outcome from the other "precogs" (i.e. it sees the criminal-to-be not being a criminal). The problem with this "minority report" is that it gets shelved aside through a statistical consideration that a deviant vision from one "precog" cannot be more right than the consensual visions of the two other "precogs." That it should be otherwise is almost impossible, almost unthinkable. In that way, the "minority report" never gets delivered or read. The criminal-to-be, as interpreted and decided by "precrime," and who may just not be the criminal, and will never even be when arrested by "precrime," never sees the light of this information that he or she might indeed not even be the criminal-to-be after all in the first place. If this "minority report" were given a proper sending (and not a sending-off) in simultaneity with the dissemination of the preemptive "precrime" operation to "neutralize" the criminal-to-be, it would have been the prophylaxis against the preemptive that denies the right to be alive. It would be prophylactic in another way too, and certainly securing the right to be alive at the same time, should it be given a time of dissemination. According to John Anderton, the prophylaxis of the "minority report" would work by giving the criminal-to-be a space and time for a counter-hypothesis that will see to him or her not following through the crime as interpreted by the "precog"-"monkey machine"-human interpreter-"precrime" complex. It is only with the making possible the reading or readability of the "minority report" that "the preview of the [crime] had cancelled out the [crime]; prophylaxis had occurred simply in [John Anderton] being informed" (Dick 1997:340). To counter the preemptive, it is all a matter of sending out the prophylaxis.

3.

00:00:00

Prophylaxis, a medical term of modern times, denotes a preventive against a disease, against syphilis especially in the 1840s (incidentally the disease that took the life of the composer of the soundtrack to Spielberg's scene). And to be sure, there is no doubt of it being in the order of a preemptive. Like the preemptive, it needs to be sent out, as marked by its pro- prefix. It needs a sending-off of itself to the place where a preventive is needed against an impending life-destroying threat. And there is a speed to this sending-out or sending-off in its movement of a "towards" that approaches what needs it in order to live on. A prophylaxis delayed only leaves death(s) to remain. So more often than not, a fastness is attached to it in order to secure a critical time to complete its objective to secure life. But in this speed, it sometimes leaves no proper consideration of the adequateness of its application or

applicability. As such, one is exposed to the risks of the prophylaxis failing to cure because it is ineffective—which still results in a fatality that it originally seeks to prevent; or worse, of it intensifying the fatality because the hypothesis of it causing greater harm is not given time to be tested out. In the fastness of its sending-out of itself in this case, the desire to gain critical time only intensifies the speed of fatality. And it is as such that the prophylaxis acquires the aporetic turns of a poison-remedy not unlike the pharmakon. What is originally set out to be a life-maintaining or life-securing trajectory becomes a destructive projectile. This is the sense one gets with the preemptive today. But perhaps this declension of the prophylaxis into a destructive preemptive is already etymologically marked in itself. For -phylaxis says "a watching, guarding after" according to the Oxford English Dictionary, and the senses of surveillance and sentry surely give it a militant edge that similarly surrounds the contemporary understanding of the preemptive. This is the aporia of the prophylaxis: it belongs to the order of the preemptive but only so because it seeks to prevent harm from arriving to life; but in the speed of its sending-out of itself, it risks lapsing into a fatal destructive projectile that only sends-off its life-securing prophylactic trace.

The point is to avoid the prophylaxis becoming a death machine in overdrive. For Philip K. Dick in Minority Report, it is a matter of sending out the strategic information of the prophylaxis. And it is necessary that this sending-out must see to a time of receiving, understanding, and consideration of a prophylaxis that is in contradistinction to the act of a militant preemptive. This prophylaxis, even if it comes just after the preemptive that propels with a certain force, must be sent nonetheless, so that it can have at least a chance to negotiate with the latter. The preemptive, as it stands today in the eyes of the military and police, does not look towards the offering of the prophylaxis, and does not await the responsible response to the prophylaxis. In relation to such a force of the preemptive, the prophylaxis is always untimely. It either never arrives, because it is already made a non-event by the fatal preemptive. Or it arrives in overdrive, too forcefully, as the pharmakon-poison preemptive itself. Or more likely, the prophylaxis has no time. Its time of arrival would always be already denied as in the first case where the fatal preemptive has already been delivered in accelerated manner. Or else the prophylaxis as the destructive preemptive always already convinces itself that there is always not enough time for further contemplation or that there is no time for thought in its application. This results in the case of an always no time for a prophylaxis to be offered to the perpetrator-to-be to consider (just in case it puts the lives of others at risk and one would be faced with an even higher death count). In the opening scenes of "precrime" fighting in Spielberg's adaptation of Minority Report, the time on John Anderton's watch, as "precrime" is achieved if not perfected, reads 00:00:00: the no time of the preemptive/prophylaxis.

4.

Wait

At present, the time of the preemptive presents the targeted body without the chance, or the right, to offer a counter-hypothesis, so as to prove the preemptive erroneous. The targeted body of the preemptive is not offered, and cannot offer, a prophylaxis contra the preemptive so as to delay the elimination of the right to be alive. In other words, in the staging of the preemptive, there is no space for disagreement. His or her speech, phone or logos—the desperate cries (phone) of denial of any (future) wrongdoing; or the cries of injustice of a treatment towards another human being, articulated in a linguistic idiom rational and intelligible (logos); and the cries to surrender (including deferring one's own innocence for the sake of one's safety)—no longer matters. It is no longer heard, as in the case of the preemptive shooting in Miami. Even silence is not heard either, as in the case of the London shooting. The rush of a preemptive is a sonic barrage that drowns out any (silent) voice that seeks to defer it. The gap opened by a suspected body between itself and the law that promises the security of the territory is already too great. The law and its need to secure a terrifying peace cannot bear the widening or delaying of that interval by a further demand of a disagreeing counter-hypothesis or auto-prophylaxis.

To allow the normalization of the fatal preemptive would be to institute the legitimization of an absolute or extreme biopolitics. According to Foucault, biopolitics is the control and management of individual bodies by the State through technics of knowledge (usually through surveillance) of those same bodies. In a biopolitical situation, the State holds the exceptional power to determine either the right to let live or make die the individual belonging to the State. Should the preemptive become a force of reason of contemporary life, one would terribly risk submitting the freedom of life and therefore an unconditional right to be alive to a biopolitical capture, handing over the right

to let die to the State police and military powers. It would be a situation of abdicating the body as a totally exposed frontier of absolute war. For in the constant exposure of the imminent preemptive, the body at any time—when decided upon by military or police powers to be a security threat—becomes the point in which the space and time of conductibility of war collapse in a total manner. The preemptive reduces the body to a total space of absolute war. Virilio has suggested that the absolute destruction of an enemy in war is procured when the enemy can no longer hypothesize an alternate if not counter route or trajectory (of escape or counter-attack) from impending forces (1990: 17). In the sequence of executing the preemptive to its resolute end, the escaping body faces that same threat of zero hypothesis. There is no chance for that body to think (itself) outside the vortical preemptive. Preemptive bullets into the head would take away that chance of hypothesis.

A spectral figure begins to haunt the scene now. And that is the figure of the homo sacer, who according to Agamben's analysis, is the one who in ancient times is killed without his or her death being a religious sacrifice, and the one whose killers are nonindictable of homicide. This figure is also the sign par excellence of the absolute biopolitical capture of life by the State, in which the decision to let live and make die is absolutely managed and decided by the State, and thereby the right to be alive is no longer the fact of freedom of existence for the homo sacer (Agamben 1998). For the right to be alive to be secured in any real sense from any political capture, for it to be maintained and guaranteed as and for the future of the human, the body cannot be allowed to return to this figure of the homo sacer. But victims of the preemptive irrepressibly recall the figure of the homo sacer. In the current legal proceedings of the London shooting, it has not been the fact that the police officers shot an innocent Brazilian that they will be charged. That charge remains absent. The charge of homicide against the officers remains elliptical. Instead, the plan has been to charge them for altering the police log book to conceal the fact that they had mistakenly identified the victim as a terror suspect.

The possible turn of human life into the figure of homo sacer as decided by forces of the police or military under the overarching security measure of the preemptive divides the common space of existence. The space of existence becomes less than common now. The preemptive, as in the decision of a homo sacer, brings along with it a certain profiling of certain peoples, regardless of whether the force of law or the State would like to admit or not to such profiling measures. The law or the State would deny this unspoken profiling, but the evidence of its real imminence is felt by the peoples who would most likely fall under the category that the police or military would identify as a possible terror threat. And there is no denying that this profiling largely takes on an ethnic contour. And the fears of such a contouring are not unspoken. "Anyone with dark skin who was running for a bus or Tube could be thought to be about to detonate a bomb," expressed a concerned Labor peer Lord Ahmed for the U.K. Muslim community after the London shooting ("U.K. Muslims Feel 'Under Suspicion'" BBC News. 25 July 2005). The irreducible profiling in the culture of the preemptive is happening in the United States too. A New York Times article reports of a police-speak of "M.E.W.C's" under its intense surveillance—"Middle Eastern with a camera—perhaps taking pictures of a bridge, a hydropower plant or a reservoir" (Kershaw, New York Times. 25 July 2005). The nonnative ethnic community senses a state of emergency that works against them, that restricts their freedom of living on without fear. Indeed, after the London shooting, the BBC carried a report that said "many young Muslims were reluctant to leave their homes" ("U.K. Muslims Feel 'Under Suspicion'" BBC News. 25 July 2005). Their right to be alive becomes under siege as they "believed they could become victims of mistaken identity by armed police" (ibid.). They simply cannot hypothesize, innocent as they are of the intent of terror, a way to disprove the charge of the deadly preemptive that (mis)identifies or profiles them as possible terror suspects. As a Muslim living in Manchester says, "How do I know I won't just be picked up and labeled as a terrorist?" (ibid.). The possibility of a counter-hypothesis against the preemptive, and the unconditional right to be alive, become for these peoples, the unthinkable. That is what Anderton in Minority Report feels too once the naming of himself as a criminal-to-be and the decision of the preemptive capture of him have been disseminated. Even with a counter-proof that he will not commit a crime, he resigns to the fact that nothing can be done to reverse the precession of the preemptive, nothing to stop "precrime" from believing that he has not "the remotest intention of killing" (Dick 1997:329).

For a critical response to the preemptive, such that a counter-hypothesis to disprove the preemptive is thinkable, such that no profiling politics of homo sacer is resurrected, and such that a right to be alive unconditionally remains thinkable or remains open and free to thought, one needs to open the space of disagreement with it and resist it, even though the State cannot bear such an interval between its preemptive law for territorial security and the interruption of a disagreement. One nonetheless has to interrupt the preemptive in overdrive to allow the counter-hypothesis or its prophylaxis to surface or arrive; or, one has to interrupt the prophylaxis when it precipitates into a destructive

preemptive. And one cannot allow this reserve of the prophylaxis in contradistinction with the deadly preemptive to be the sole domain or hidden property of exceptional power. It cannot be deferred to be the decision and the enclosed time of reading of power. That is in fact the aporia of the prophylaxis in the text of Minority Report. John Anderton comes to realize that the prophylaxis of him not being a criminal-to-come is possible only because only he, as a figure of sovereign power, as the chief of "precrime" operations, has access to this strategic information. It is a privileged access, exceptional only to him, and not to the others, the other common beings that do not personify the figure of law and therefore already arrested for a crime they have not (yet) commit. Only John Anderton can be offered the prophylaxis (provided he chooses to want to read it), and only he can offer a prophylaxis. As he admits at the end of the text, "My case was unique, since I had access to the [prophylaxis] data. It could happen again—but only to the next Police Commissioner" (Dick 1997:353). But the sending and the offering of the prophylaxis cannot remain as the exceptional reserve of figures of law. It must arrive from the other side of the law, arriving as the disagreement with the preemptive, and it must be listened to. This disagreement will be the time that holds back if not delays the preemptive so that a prophylaxis can come into negotiation with it.

Disagreement here will be the enunciation of wait in response to the preemptive. Indeed, wait is the word in Spielberg's adaptation upon which is hinged the critical duration that offers the prophylaxis that will be the counter-hypothesis to the deadly preemptive. John Anderton gets an initial glimpse of the value of holding back a second before rushing to the crime-scene-to-come, when a counter-check on the information of the address of the criminal-to-be shows it as obsolete. Finally arriving at the right address, John Anderton proceeds to arrest the criminal-to-be, ignoring the cries of "wait" of the latter—perhaps because he has not committed any crime yet, or perhaps he did not intend to follow through the act he thought he would commit. Anderton then, as the leader of the "precrime" task force, of course does not wait. But the critical value of wait and its offering of a prophylaxis or counter-hypothesis against the preemptive begin to turn on John Anderton when his image and name appear as the future perpetrator of a future crime. He then understands the value of the enunciation of wait to disarticulate the accelerated judgment of the "precogs" and to secure his right to be alive against the preemptive force of "precrime." But as said, wait cannot be the sole remainder of sovereignty. Wait must also arrive from the side of the one without power but under threat of the preemptive. And it must be heard, and received by the forces of law delivering the preemptive. Wait might be an untimely word for the speed of the preemptive. "There is little time to waste," as the police chiefs of the United States proclaim in consensus (New York Times. 25 July 2005). But wait is not insignificant refuse, ready to be abandoned absolutely in no time, if its act of refusal of the deadly speed of the preemptive in fact proves the preemptive wrong or that it offers another possibility unthinkable to the preemptive and thereby keeps open the chance for the right to be alive. Wait, in negotiation if not in disagreement with the speed of the preemptive, is that interruption, that possible chance and prophylaxis for the right to be alive, by saying that there is something not totally right about the preemptive.

5.

> An international organization representing police chiefs has broadened its policy for the use of deadly force by telling officers to shoot suspected suicide bombers in the head.
> —Washington Post, as cited in Reuters. 04 August 2005.
>
> They should not be exterminating people unjustly. [2]
> —"Ban 'Shoot-to-Kill, Urge Family." BBC News. 27 July 2005.

The articulation of wait cannot be more urgent today. It must be pronouncedly reiterated, in disagreement with the deadly preemptive, before the latter becomes a "necessary" global security condition of living in the world today. The deadly preemptive without chance for a counterhypothetic prophylaxis being offered must be resisted against its gaining momentum to procure a global consensual, legal status. And even if it is already in the process of being legalized or normalized as a contemporary fact or "necessity" of life in this twenty-first century of insecurity, it still has to be disagreed with. According to Rancière, consensus is arrived at from a striated observation of the real. The real today is a situation in which terror is surprising major cities and cities thought to be defensible against if not impenetrable to such surprises in ever greater media visibility and spectacle. To prevent more of these terrifying

surprises (mediatising themselves) elsewhere, or such that second surprises will not tear apart the same city, the determination has been to short-circuit the possible dissemination of such terror at whatever cost. And this is where the preemptive has come in, the only possible measure to erase the slightest shadow of the next surprise. It cannot take chances. There is no chance for the counter-hypothesis. The real "is the absorption of all reality and all truth in the category of the only thing possible" (Rancière 1999:132). This is the real through which the consensus on the preemptive is or will be reached. The consensus is that "which asserts, in all circumstances, that it is only doing the only thing possible to do" (ibid.). The aggregation of the striated observation of the real, the "only thing possible to do," and consensus, is the final collapse of thinking of another trajectory of the future of the real, the erasure of the exposition of what is unthinkable or impossible that will falsify the future of "the only thing possible to do."

The singular fatal preemptive cannot become a consensus of the "only thing possible to do." It cannot be thought as a necessity of security, a "perceptible given of common life" (Rancière 2004:7). Furthermore, consensus tends to fail to solve the problem it seeks to address. According to Rancière, in the political scene of the late 1990s, "'Consensus' was presented as the pacification of conflicts that arose from ideologies of social struggle, and yet it brought about anything but peace" (2004:4). Instead, there has been but the "re-emergence and success of racist and xenophobic movements" (ibid.). One can hardly imagine that a different outcome will indeed arise with the consensus of the deadly preemptive today. While policies are being put in place to rid a territory of hatred or hate-mongers, as in the United Kingdom today, the normalization of the preemptive, which brings along with it its unspoken profiling contours, would only serve to undermine if not contradict the former, since the profiling contour of the preemptive has been known elsewhere to have "produced tremendous resentment and hostility" [3] (Kershaw, New York Times. 25 July 2005).

And as the American State war-machine leads the world in the global "war on terror," conducting war in countries like Iraq to preempt the spread of terror, not only is the right to be alive of innocent civilians in Iraq denied by military collateral damage there, but any homeland in America or elsewhere has not the sense that it has procured a better security. Instead, there remains the constant fear of further terror carried out under the pretext of retaliation against the preemptive like the one in Iraq. This worry has been exactly the same sentiment echoed recently in response to the Bush Administration's engineering of its next preemptive military measure, the Prompt Global Strike (PGS): "[PGS] may push potential hostile nations to be prepared to launch nuclear-armed missiles with even less notice than before in order to avoid them being destroyed in any preemptive U.S. first strike. Therefore, […] far from making the American people and homeland safer, the development of such weapons could put them at even greater risk from thermonuclear attack" (Sieff, United Press International. 09 February 2006). More than exorcizing the past trauma, the preemptive only perpetuates more trauma as more lives are lost and the right to be alive severely striated by the force of law. The global legal consensus on the singular deadly preemptive is therefore nothing short of terrifying either. One is reminded of Minority Report here, in which "rule by terror" is also the name given to the "precrime" methods of preemptively "arresting innocent men—nocturnal police raids, that sort of thing" (Dick 1997:348). And in turn, does that not remind one of all those rendition operations of the CIA, in which terror suspects, some of them arrested preemptively, and some of them already proven innocent in yet another case of mistaken identity or intelligence let-down of the preemptive, are rendered to prisons outside the United States where they can get no legal help and where they may more likely than not be tortured, in clear violation of international law? These preemptive renditions are now beginning to be slowly unveiled to have some sort of consensus from some European nations like the United Kingdom and Germany, and nations that have had supported these prisons such as Poland, Romania, Morocco, and Thailand.

There is something not very democratic about the preemptive, to say the least. And the more consensus it gathers around it, the more undemocratic its practice will become. This is at least Rancière's argument of the consensus. For Rancière, consensus is nothing short of the erasure of politics or democracy. The aura of democratic practice that surrounds the politics of consensus is but a false illusion. Politics or democracy should be that primary irreducible gesture of disagreement with any injustice that is at work against an individual or a collective, especially the injustice that detaches the individual or a certain collective from an immanent fact of common freedom by denying them the right to partake of that common. But consensus does not open a space for such a gesture. Instead, according to Rancière, consensus is only "the dissolution of all political differences and juridical distinctions," the "erasing [of] the contestatory, conflictual nature of the very givens of common life" (Rancière 2004:8/7). It would only be in the spirit of democracy to disagree with the consensus, the consensus of the preemptive in all its forms.

6.

> The reality is we have a large population [of Arabs and Muslims] in our community that immediately become suspect, whether that is right or wrong, because of the global war. For me to sit here and say, 'I'm not concerned' would be wrong, but for me to sit here and say, 'Yes I'm concerned' would also be wrong.
> —Chief Barnett Jones of Sterling, Michigan Police Department, "Suicide Bombings Bring Urgency to Police in U.S," New York Times. 25 July 2005.
>
> Somebody else could be shot but everything is done to make it right.
> —UK Metropolitan Police Chief Sir Ian Blair, "'Shoot-to- Kill' Policy to Remain." BBC News. 25 July 2005.
>
> So the officer [involved in the London shooting] did a horrible thing. But he also did the right thing.
> —Watzman, New York Times. 28 July 2005

Wrong. The fact remains that the victim of the London police preemptive shooting had no link to terror—had no intent of terror. (neither had the victim of the Miami shooting.) There is nothing right about that preemptive act. It has been a wrong calculation, a wrong decision, executed in a method of resolute excess. This is not the first time intelligence fails the preemptive. It has failed in the case of the Iraq war of 2003, since no "weapons of mass destruction" have been found, while the hypothesis of stores of such weapons has been but evidence in absentia that "justified" the projectile of war against Iraq to preempt Iraq from disseminating the said weapons. But the remaining evidence, the only real verifiable evidence, is that there is an intelligence problem with the preemptive in overdrive.

So there is in fact a double wrong to the entire sequence of the preemptive. The misidentification of an innocent being as a terror-suspect and denying that being the right to be alive, the intelligence let-down, is the second wrong. The first wrong is what has been discussed earlier—the tearing of the immanent collective of living beings into those that are likely to fall under the force of the preemptive act and those who do not. And as said earlier too, this partition is rather discernible. Basically, the different, the non-natives of the territory tend to belong to those whose right to be alive is now abdicated to the decision of the preemptive force of law. They have no part in articulating that right by themselves anymore. They have no part in voicing out their disagreement with the irreducible profiling force of the preemptive that separates them from others who will hardly be thought to be a suspect. Their voices are simply not heard. They cannot claim to a common collective of living beings insisting on the right to be alive simply by the fact of existence. That they are under the scope of the preemptive separates them from that common. And they are also denied the equality of thinking that any act of violence against civilians of terror is undesirable. For the preemptive to regard these peoples to be as against terror now or in the future is an impossibility. That is unthinkable to the preemptive and its profiling horizon. This is the wrong that one must recognize first and foremost.

The space of wrong, in which those are wronged, must be given exposition. One must re-mark wrong, after the marking out of those who do not have equal right to be alive by the politics of preemptive. As Ranciére (1999) says,

> The concept of wrong is [...] not linked to any theater of 'victimization.' It belongs to the original structure of politics. Wrong is simply the mode of subjectification in which the assertion of equality takes it political shape. [...] Wrong institutes a singular universal, a polemical universal, by tying the presentation of equality, as the part of those who have no part, to the conflict between parts of society. (P. 39)

In relation to the imminent preemptive, "the part of those who have no part" has to be articulated. The "part of those who have no part" is that assemblage of peoples—which is, contrary to the delimited perspective of the preemptive, certainly not limited to the migrant, the illegal immigrant, the asylum seeker, the ethnic peoples—who have no part in being presumed innocent or being without suspicion of intent of terror as demarcated by that politics; the peoples who disagree with the deadly force of the preemptive without agreeing with the ideologies and methods of terror; and the peoples who without crime and without intent of crime desire just a right to disappear and just run, from the force of law. It is a people to come, to use Deleuze and Guattari's term, who will say wait to the speed of the preemptive, who will disagree with the law of the preemptive, as long as the law refuses to allow the sending of the prophylaxis or the time of a counter-hypothesis. The beginning of the paper suggested that if one is to disagree with the preemptive, one needs to get outside of it. This assemblage of "the part of those who have no part" is precisely the people to come who are outside the consensus (the police chiefs, the State, the military complex) that seeks to normalize the preemptive. They are therefore the outside whose exposé must not be denied or deferred anymore. With them reserves the potentiality of what Ranciére calls "dis-sensus" that will break the politics

of consensus, the politics of consensus on the preemptive.

The voice of this assemblage might not be heard at present, blocked by the deafening speed of the preemptive, yet this assemblage nonetheless has to have a persistence in inscribing itself as an exposition that disagrees with the politics of the preemptive. And it will do so only to (re)claim that common fact of right to be alive without submitting to the decision of the preemptive, to (re)claim the common equality to be presumed innocent and be without profiling by the preemptive, and the common equality of sharing the common desire to resist the ideologies and methods of terror. The persistence of this assemblage inscribing itself is its force of disagreement. (Disagreement or mésentente for Ranciére is about the persistence of the exposition of wrong.) This disagreement is the prophylaxis the assemblage brings to the preemptive, displacing it, counter-checking it, counter-arguing it. The persistence this assemblage gives is also what Ranciére calls the "processing" of a wrong. It "passes through the constitution of specific subjects that take the wrong upon themselves, give it shape, invent new forms and names for it to conduct its processing in a specific montage of proofs" (Ranciére 1999:40). With regard to the preemptive, these proofs will be those that prove that a prophylaxis or counter-hypothesis may change the course the "suspect" takes and therefore maintaining every single possibility of the right to be alive, proofs that disarticulate the interpretation and judgment of the preemptive and therefore securing for the mistaken identity the right to be alive, and proofs that the profiling contours of the preemptive is wrong to deny them the equality of being presumed innocence and without suspicion of terror-intent. This persistence can be seen as an effective prophylaxis or counter-hypothesis because it is also an interval, an "opening up [of] the world where argument can be received and have an impact" (Ranciére 1999:56, my emphasis). This persistence is like the counter-hypothetic "minority report" in Philip K. Dick's text. And just as a "minority report" must be given an exposure to counter the deadly preemptive, so must this persistence.

7.

> So they can see the living proof. You and I together—the killer and his victim. Standing side by side, exposing the whole sinister fraud which the police have been operating.
> —Dick 1997:350

If there is anything disappointing about the dénouement of the text of Minority Report, it is perhaps its reactionary turn at the end. There is the chance for Anderton to live out the possibility, the counter-hypothesis of him not being a murderer-to-be. It is the chance presented to him when Anderton's prospective victim according to the "precrime" vision of the future, Kaplan, invites Anderton onto an impromptu stage to expose the flaw of "precrime," to expose the fact that "precrime" makes wrong judgment like the possible misidentifying of Anderton as a potential killer. That could have constituted the emergence of disagreement with the preemptive, as Anderton and Kaplan, "the killer and his victim," "standing side by side," exposes the wrong of "precrime." And the right to be alive, for both Anderton and Kaplan, would have been preserved. But the status quo of the preemptive "precrime" is reinstated instead. In a flash of "blind terror," (Dick 1997: 352) Anderton decides to fulfill the prophecy of "precrime" and fatally shoots Kaplan (One cannot help reading it as a foreshadowing of the "blind terror" of the London shooting in complete view of tube commuters). The exposure of the flaw of "precrime" is thereby short-circuited and the institution of the preemptive is maintained. "Precrime" is secured from any criticism, from any prophylaxis. But the right to be alive is compromised, not Anderton's at least, but Kaplan's. Aside from the politics between the police and the military of which Kaplan belongs, one finds it difficult to justify the exchange of Kaplan's right to be alive for the perpetuation of the preemptive "precrime" system. Anderton , by that time, had already acknowledged and experienced the flaw of "precrime," the flaw that "there've been other innocent people(1997: 333)" under the "precrime" directive. He was going to forcefully resist or disagree with the "precrime" system, for his right to be alive. He had said, "If the system can survive only by imprisoning innocent people, then it deserves to be destroyed. My personal safety is important because I'm a human being" (1997:342). But in the end, Anderton's thought of life is abdicated to a thought of the system. The moment Anderton decides to murder Kaplan is the moment when he "was thinking about the system" so that the "basic validity of the Precrime system" will not be shaken (1997:342, 350). At the end, all is normal with the preemptive "precrime" system. It returns to the terrifying normalcy of the preemptive condition.

Life must not imitate fiction in this case. Once again, critical thought must resist any consensual normalization

of the preemptive condition. But to be sure again, there is no disputing the good intentions and the possible good what a preemptive can deliver. One cannot ignore the fact that its point of departure is to be prophylactic. The question, perhaps, is about the question of the relative speeds of the preemptive itself. It would be a question of negotiating between its belatedness—so as to let arrive a possible counter-hypothesis, and its acceleration. To put it in another way, it would be a question of opening up a space of disagreement between its two speeds. Every policy seeks to be both a just act or an act of justice, and an act that serves a certain functionality. The problem with policies is that States assume an uninterrupted or noncontestable continuum between functionality and justice. But according to Ranciére, this continuum is but a "false continuity" (1999:21). For Ranciére, there is always a wrong that interrupts this continuum: "Between the useful and the just lies the incommensurability of wrong" (ibid.). The articulation of this wrong, which posits a disagreement with an act presumed to be both functional and just, or which proves the "false continuity" between functionality and justice of an act, cannot disappear, cannot be made to disappear. This articulation must surface. So there must be the persistence of exposition of disagreement with the preemptive as it is today, so as to (re)open thought to the unconditional right to be alive that the deadly preemptive is putting into danger, and to open the entire question of the preemptive to intensive critique and inquiry so as to prevent all thoughts of the preemptive to collapse into an uncritical consensus on its deadly speed. The force of persistence of disagreement would also put into question the undemocratic profiling and partitioning practices of the preemptive. Its exposition will only "presuppose the refutation of a situation's given assumptions" (assumptions like the deadly speed of the preemptive as the only necessity of contemporary security condition; the assumption that the ethnic different, the nonnative, the migrant, tends to incline towards a propensity of future terror) and "the introduction of previously uncounted objects and subjects" (like that of the assemblage of wrong) (Ranciére 2004:7). As Ranciére says, disagreement is "the invention of a question that no one was asking themselves until then" (1999:33). The time of invention of a question in disagreement with the preemptive is none other than but now.

Endnotes

1. I am indebted to Ben Agger and the anonymous reader(s) at Fast Capitalism for their critical comments and suggestions that have helped to make this paper a better piece.

2. Vivien Figueiredo, cousin of victim Jean Charles de Menezes of the U.K. police preemptive "shoot-to-kill" policy, as quoted in "Ban 'Shoot-to-Kill, Urge Family." BBC News. 27 July 2005.

3. Ibrahim Hooper, spokesman for Council on American-Islamic Relations, Washington, as quoted in Sarah Kershaw. "Suicide Bombings Bring Urgency to Police in U.S." New York Times. 25 July 2005.

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Betty Friedan and Simone de Beauvoir

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Betty Friedan died February 4, 2006 on her eighty-fifth birthday. Her passing marks the ending of an era of feminist revolution she helped to spark. Some would say that in America she started it all by herself. Certainly, The Feminine Mystique in 1963 fueled the fire of a civil rights movement that was about to burn out after a decade of brilliant successes in the American South. The rights in question for Friedan were, of course, those of women—more exactly, as it turned out, mostly white women of the middle classes.

Unlike other movement leaders of that day, Friedan was a founder and first president of an enduring, still effective, woman's rights organization. NOW, (the National Organization for Women), came into being in 1966, but soon after was eclipsed by the then rapidly emerging radical movements. Many younger feminists found NOW's emphasis on political and economic rights too tame for the radical spirit of the moment. The late 1960s were a time for the Weather Underground, the SCUM Manifesto, Black Power and the Black Panthers. By 1968 even SDS was overrun by the radicalizing wave across the spectrum of social movements.

Yet, in time, Friedan's political and intellectual interventions proved the more lasting. SDS and SNCC are today subjects of historical study by academic sociologists who never came close to having their skulls crushed by a madman. But NOW survives in the work of many thousands in every state of the American Union. Early in the 2000s, by the measure of what now passes for left-liberal politics in America, NOW sounds downright progressive. NOW's 2006 statement of purpose remains true to Friedan's politics without the least trace of neo-liberal or third-way drivel:

> Since its founding in 1966, NOW's goal has been to take action to bring about equality for all women. NOW works to eliminate discrimination and harassment in the workplace, schools, the justice system, and all other sectors of society; secure abortion, birth control and reproductive rights for all women; end all forms of violence against women; eradicate racism, sexism and homophobia; and promote equality and justice in our society.

On the other hand, Feminine Mystique, the book that inspired it all, is remembered mostly for its historical importance. Yet, it is today an unread classic a half-century after it broke the code of silence that oppressed so many white women in their silly little suburban lives—uncomfortable in those vapidly comfortable houses. My mother was among those who did not read Friedan—so oppressed was she by a tyrannical and insecure husband. Yet, millions recognized the problem that, until Friedan, had no name. The flash of recognition that the modern way of family values was no more than a cheap and foul abuse of women, wives, and mothers quickly raged beyond domestic fire walls.

Friedan's reputation as an intellectual may have been burned in the heat of the times. Yet, in remembering her, no one should suppose Betty Friedan was a lightweight. On the contrary, after leaving Smith College she did a year of graduate study in psychology at Berkeley. She was in her own word "brilliant" at academic work, but it satisfied her little. She left schooling for the career in journalism that led to her famous book and for the marriage and family life that would supply the book its fresh authority. Feminine Mystique's chapter on "The Sexual Solipsism of Sigmund Freud" is an incisive exposé of the way Freud's narrow theories of sexual differences had putrefied postwar thinking on woman's place in the home. It would be 1970 before Kate Millett's Sexual Politics would take up the line Friedan had set down in 1963—and still a while longer, well into the 1980s, before American feminists would begin to read Lacan to rethink Freud's ridiculous theory of feminine sexual envy. Not even the one truly great book to have

preceded Feminine Mystique in the postwar era would tackle Freud as well as Friedan had.

That other book was, of course, Simone de Beauvoir's Second Sex, which appeared in English in 1952, well after Friedan had left graduate studies in psychology. Not even Beauvoir, who certainly understood Freud very well, went to the heart of his mistakes. Like Millett, Beauvoir's contentions were based more on literary than scientific sources. One must go back very far indeed—perhaps all the way to Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Women and Economics in 1898—to find so robust a social-psychology of the structured plight of women of the white middle classes.

Just the same, Friedan and Beauvoir will forever be linked in the collective memory of those days. They were, though very different kinds of public intellectuals, points of reckoning for a rethinking of woman's position in the scheme of social and cultural things. Second Sex was, by far, the more complete philosophical critique. Against it, Feminine Mystique will always appear the more dated and flimsy. Still, Simone de Beauvoir, when asked many years later about the role of her book in the subsequent feminist movement, said without a hint of false modesty that she thought it had no influence whatsoever. Friedan, by contrast, may not have written the more enduring book, but her political force would linger as a clear and certain factor in feminist politics in the United States. In this respect, Friedan was the public intellectual more in keeping with political troubles that predominate in our time.

Yet, in quite another way, Friedan and Beauvoir are bound together in the changing history of feminist thought and practice. They were at the center of political and cultural movements that held the stage at a crucial moment of global change. As a consequence, they were also members of a generation of feminist thinkers now coming to the end of its time. Beauvoir (1908-1986) died near her eightieth year exactly twenty years before Friedan's death. She was almost a generation older than Friedan who was born in 1921. Yet, the two were giants of the same moment. Their great works appeared at either end of the two decades following World War Two. It was a time when, briefly, the cultural differences between North America and Western Europe were most striking. The United States throve in those decades on the industrial spoils of its brilliant success in the war. Europe was more sober for the visible fact of the material devastations upon which it would have to rebuild. The differences in social and economic prospects in those days may well have led to the illusion, long professed by the Americans, of an unbridgeable cultural divide between the two sides of Atlantic power. The Americans believed that victory was still another proof positive of their exceptional virtue. The Europeans, who never thought this way, at least not as Americans have since the 1840s, had to probe deeper into the reasons for their own deferrals and collapses before the Nazi evil.

The French theorist was beyond neglecting the long history and deep structure of, in the word she helped popularize, the *othering* of women. One of the most powerful passages in Second Sex is in the early section where Beauvoir, drawing equally on Levinas and Lévi-Strauss, bolsters her exposition of woman as other by identifying her with other others: "'The eternal feminine' corresponds to 'the black soul,' and to 'the Jewish character'." A small gesture perhaps—save for the ferocity of her politics in which she stood firm with all those groups oppressed by the European ideal of universal man. This was 1949. Levinas was barely read, even in France. Lévi-Strauss was just publishing the early essays of his structural anthropology. Yet, in a book that would eventually be read by many who would never read Heidegger much less Jakobson, Beauvoir wrote lines that would resonate for decades to come. The idea of *othering* would effectively have to await the movement that encouraged the reading of Lacan's theory of the Unconscious as the discourse of the Other.

That movement was, of course, third wave feminism which arose on the allowances of the second wave. As early standpoint feminism was decidedly second-wave, so the third wave of queer and analytically unstable categories was an elaboration of the theoretical space opened by the second wave's definition of woman's subject position. Beauvoir's book was, thus, a decidedly second-wave book, rooted in the European post-war experience. It may or may not have led to the third-wave theories associated with Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray in France and Judith Butler and Donna Haraway in the United States. But it was a harbinger. As was Friedan's Feminine Mystique. Not enough credit is given the harbinger. The robin's return does not cause flowers to bloom. But it allows the winter weary to keep an eye open for the bursts of yellow and green.

There was once a controversy among feminists as to whether Friedan had stolen her ideas from Beauvoir. For a long while I tracked the debate. Then I lost interest long enough that when, later, I tried to find what became of it, nothing was to be found—at least not by the usual electronic methods. The whole thing was ludicrous—some late second-waver fighting for tenure no doubt. No one who had read both books could possibly accuse Friedan of such a thing. Plus which, in her refusal to claim influence over the women's liberation movement, Beauvoir remarked correctly that though Kate Millett made no mention of her Friedan did. The famous dedication of Feminine Mystique to Simone de Beauvoir could have been made only by one who was anything but guilty over her public debt to Beauvoir. Yet, Friedan's acknowledgement of Beauvoir was made as it should have been. It was not an intellectual

but a political and historical debt she noted.

Now that both are gone, there remain few from the second wave of feminists who continue that earlier way of thinking; and some of those who remain are bitter for the losses their hard work caused them in the coin of the academic real: recognition. Judith Butler irritates the hell out of some; perhaps rightly so. It is not at all fair that women who did the hard work of fighting the embedded patriarchy that once uniformly governed the academy not to be honored for their labors. Butler's Gender Trouble (1990) is one of the all-time best-sellers of feminist social theory. Its author wrote it out of her own considerable genius. But it could not have been received as it has been without the generations of younger thinkers who benefited from the teaching of older feminists who taught, as they fought, for a seat at the table of academic legitimacy. Butler and Irigaray are to be sure *sui generis*, but they would not be forces unto themselves without readers and there would not have been readers without Friedan and Beauvoir—or their functional equivalents.

From all indications Betty Friedan was not, in the word of an earlier day, a "nice" person. She was tough and rough, which was a key to her political success. She was—like few others, others of many different political dispositions—determined to see what she saw and do as she did. We look back and see, in the continuing work of NOW and so many other movements and institutions, that she was strangely prescient as well as firm in her purposes.

I met Betty Friedan but once, in passing. It was a late winter Friday afternoon in a town in the Hamptons before the jitney would bring the hordes. I was with the then new love of my life, now my wife, at a time when, as she put it, our relation was very wet. We went to the movies, if only for relief from the excitement. The film on view was Madonna's Truth or Dare—a kind of self-tribute to the one who in 1991 was clearly the very embodiment of third-wave feminism. It was the first hour of the first day of the film's national release. There were three people in the theater. The third was Betty Friedan. I mumbled something as we came across her on leaving. The remarkable fact of it all was that the icon of second-wave feminism was so eager to hear and see the story of the icon of third-wave feminism. Like Beauvoir, Friedan embraced what would come, including that which would not come from her.

In the retrospect, as my generation of social theorists make ready to leave the scene to join those already gone, the generosity of these two harbingers reminds of the eternal return of the springtime of ideas and action. In the 2000s—the winter of our lives and, it would seem, of the age of honest values—the robins matter a lot. They are the life that foreshadows new life—needed now more than ever. The groundhogs are cowards seeking a hole in the earth. The birds brave the chill to signify what can and will be.

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