FAST CAPITALISM

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

About the Authors

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Ben Agger teaches sociology and humanities at the University of Texas at Arlington. His most recent books are Postponing the Postmodern, The Virtual Self, and Speeding Up Fast Capitalism. He is working on a book, with Beth Anne Shelton, entitled Fast Families, Virtual Children. He is also working on a book about the sixties, Hey, Hey LBJ: Generation and Identity among Sixties People. He can be contacted at agger@uta.edu.

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Noah Kersey received his BA in sociology and anthropology from Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon in 2001. Since graduation, Noah has worked with Robert Goldman and Stephen Papson on developing new teaching tools and investigating ways to create collaborative opportunities among those studying advertising. These projects have nourished his interest in visual design and the ways that emerging technologies can intersect, complement and ultimately enhance the academic realm. By day, Noah works in the outdoor education field coordinating and leading trips for Lewis & Clark College's Outdoor Program.

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Stephen Papson teaches sociology at St. Lawrence University in Canton, New York. With Robert Goldman, he has co-authored Sign Wars and Nike Culture: The Sign of the Swoosh, and with Goldman and Noah Kersey has constructed the website Landscapes of Capital. Presently, he is exploring the use of hypertext in both scholarship and pedagogy.

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Speed: Through, Across, and In —
The Landscapes of Capital

Robert Goldman, Stephen Papson, Noah Kersey

Over the past four years we have been constructing a website entitled Landscapes of Capital: Representing Time, Space, and Globalization in Corporate Advertising. Our research is based on a data set that includes 1000 television commercials aired between 1995 and the present. The ads in our database feature the state of the corporation more than the commodities they are selling, and our database tilts toward certain sectors of Capital. Predominant in our sample are ads for companies in the communications, information technology, financial "services," and energy extraction and distribution sectors.

Our website is arranged in terms of six interrelated inquiries: Mapping Global Capital, Global Capital, the Semiotics of Advertising, Grand Narratives Revisited, Landscapes: the Geography of Capital, and Speed: Conquering Time and Space. It also contains a glossary, a bibliography and our searchable video database covering all the commercials in our study. Here, we have drawn from that project to present one section of our inquiry into how advertising represents the relations of time and space.

Our project addresses how Capital constructs itself in advertising discourse. We are interested in how Capital ideologically envisions its relationship to both Society and everyday life at a moment of vast historical transformation across the planet. We are interested in how Capital represents itself in relation to globalization and to the development of high technology. We are mapping the relationships between the system of commodity signs that advertising produces and the emerging global system of production and investment. More precisely still, in this essay, we want to consider how representations of speed might be related to a global system of producing time and space.

A series of closely intertwined narrative frames recur throughout the TV ads we have examined. Speed is consistently linked to the values of freedom. This is especially so in ads aimed at consumers. But speed is also linked to values of productivity, efficiency and control in ads directed at investors. It is portrayed as reducing friction and abolishing constraint. It is often depicted as populist in spirit—leveling hierarchy and putting an end to unfair privilege. Instant information flows are cast as the key to future profits as if approaching absolute speed can abolish all constraint and all limits to the growth of capital. In this sense, speed is sometimes cast as a means to a glorious end— heaven on earth.

What we see on TV of course is not speed in and of itself but a simulation of speed— it is spectacular speed. A first obvious but necessary point—depictions of Speed, on television, are mostly Visual. Speed does not eliminate landscapes, but is dependent on the presence of visually signified landscapes for its own signification. Still, representations of speed often hollow out space, hollowing out landscapes. Spaces become places to be passed through. And Speed, though it is sometimes paired with Nostalgia, tends to be incompatible with any profound sense of history or memory. After all, if everything is always a perceptual blur of speed, a blur of things rushing past, how is it possible to grab hold of the referentials that are whizzing past? Speed negates the referentiality necessary for history and memory to be constructed.

Speed becomes the visual semiotic codes used to signify "speed." And we, as viewers, have learned to distinguish between multiple significations of speed—there is out of control speed, in control speed, good speed, bad speed, frenetic speed, frozen time, indices of speed, internal speed, external speed, pleasure speed, fear speed.

Sometimes a signifier, sometimes a narrative frame, in this essay we explore some interrelated aspects of speed's representation. First, we focus on the speed of Capital and how advertising represents infrastructure in relation to time and distance. We examine the relationship of speed to flexible accumulation and some of the practices associated with it—just in time production, supply chain management, organizational flexibility, system integration, and rapid response time, and the ability to conduct markets in real time.

Second, we look at how Capital represents the relation between everyday life and these emergent corporate economic formations. Here speed overflows the boundaries of production and investment into the domain of everyday life and the world of consumption. And while constant acceleration is celebrated within production and the marketplace, it has the potential to disrupt everyday life. Managing a home and simultaneously keeping up with pressures of work is often a daunting task. Stressing time savings and the efficiency of electronic communications technologies, this advertising seeks to balance out the imperative to fill consumption time to the max with the desire to maintain control over time and space.

Third, we reflect on the representation of Speed itself. Representation does not stand autonomously outside of Capital. The logic of representation exists in a dialectic with Capital as a political economic formation. We argue that the dominant processes in each of these realms, abstraction and deterritorialization, are joined at the hip. In both, cultural signifiers are freed from their material origins and speed through the electronic circuits of Capital.

What can we learn about time space compression from the ways in which it is represented? Bound both to questions of Speed and Representation are questions about "deterritorialization." The flip side of time space compression is deterritorialization. So too, abstraction is inherently weighted towards representations of deterritorialization. How are matters of "place," "community" and "collective memory" represented when older conceptions of time and space are under pressure? What does it mean to exist outside time and space? What does it mean to conceptualize our moment in history as taking place outside time and space?

In the larger project from which this is drawn, we see that as capital spreads across the globe, advertising becomes a legitimation discourse for the new globalism, representing corporations and their practices as beneficial to individual and social well being. Taken as a whole, the ads that we have examined construct narratives saturated in mythologies of universal humanism and the wondrous power of technology, science, investment, and free markets. The same body of ads can be seen building up, and working off of, a language of images. In this way, a "pop" idiom has evolved, circulating through the various stations of the advertising cycle, that today visually establishes the assumptions for any public discussions of relations between science, technology, capital, the government, and you, the consumer.

But this political goal is not the only agenda at play in these corporate ads. The ads are also devoted to building up the sign values of the sponsoring corporation. The sign value is generally viewed as a "brand." Just as the sign value of a beer has a lot to do with which corporate beer sells the most, so the corporate sign value can be deployed to either give the brand an equity valuation pop, or be used to offset tremors in the marketplace that are the product of anxieties. In our view, advertising is a mechanism that permits the manufacture of sign values constructed out of the raw materials that are cultural in their constitution. Advertising is in this sense an "appropriation" machine, lifting meanings out of context, putting them into a relationship with a commodity or a corporation. The surge of Wall Street and the bubble market in the latter 1990s brought into being rapidly emerging bodies of corporate capital in the telecommunications sector. Companies such as Cisco, Nortel and Lucent, their market capitalization swollen on dizzying stock prices for their shares, felt compelled to both identify themselves as major players in the contemporary capitalist order, and to bolster their position in a widening investor space by building up an enhanced brand identity and brand equity. In the course of trying to bolster their public image and trying to pump up stock prices further, many companies have attempted to position themselves in terms of speed.

Speed and the Logic of Capital: Conquering Time and Space

Karl Marx, writing in the Grundrisse in 1857, anticipated how the contradictions of Capital could spur on the "annihilation of space by time." He wrote, "While capital ...must strive to tear down every barrier...to exchange and conquer the whole earth for its markets, it strives on the other side to annihilate this space with time." (Marx 1973:538 539) Certainly, advertising has done its best to equate gains in speed with general notions of progress—how often have you heard an ad refer to gaining time by using a particular product? In a world seemingly packed to capacity with things to do and places to be, the technology of speed promises to deliver us to a better place.

Breaking speed barriers is not a new obsession. Speed of movement not only signals our capacity for overcoming the fixity of geographical distance (space), it also has come to suggest the possibility for increased flexibility, efficiency and productivity. Since its inception, capitalism has measured value in terms of time inputs since the amount of labor required to produce a commodity could most easily be measured in units of time. So it stands to reason that our "common sense" understanding of technologies of speed connote a future liberation from material scarcity. In contemporary society, where time itself has become perceived as a scarce resource, appeals to instantaneity and immediacy are seductive. Has speed annihilated spatial distance? Paul Virilio writes that one of the most revolutionary transformations occurring today "is the invention of a perspective of real time."

> Real time now prevails above both real space and the geosphere. The primacy of real time, of immediacy, over and above space and surface is a fait accompli and ushers a new epoch. Something nicely conjured up in a (French) advertisement praising cellular phones with the words: "Planet Earth has never been this small" This is a very dramatic moment in our relation with the world and for our vision of the world. (Virilio 1995)

Virilio sees a dark side to the hegemony of speed. Sometimes referred to as time space compression, sometimes as deterritorialization, this process threatens/promises to transform not only the ways in which we work and do business, but also the ways in which we conduct and experience our private lives. Virilio contends that hyperspeed induces a general "loss of orientation." How do corporate ads represent hyperspeed in our lives?

Here it is important once again to distinguish between what actually goes on in the world and how it is represented, or at least leave open the question of how these are related. Our own position is that while time space compression and deterritorialization are real processes, not simply discourses, they produce neither homogeneous time nor homogeneous space. Capitalism is nothing, if not uneven, in the production of space and time.

Close inspection of the ads in our database does not reveal a singular kind of hegemonic speed, but a more contradictory set of representations. Indeed, while "faster" is everywhere presumed to be the goal in these commercials, the technologies of speed and commodification are no less obsessed with repetition—so much so that latent meanings of speed in the ads suggest that efforts at eclipsing space have placed us in an infinite loop. But the efforts at representing digital networks operating in "real time" require a shift in our vision of the world—a shift in our vision of how time, space and culture can be viewed as coordinates on a map.

Time Space Compression

Perhaps we should revisit the question of space time compression that stems from market driven races for short term profit. Few would argue today that the rhythm of business life is changing—time is compressed, pace has accelerated, and the materiality of distance is shrinking. Change is moving at Internet speed!

David Harvey advances the concept of "time space compression" to signal "processes that so revolutionize the objective qualities of space and time that we are forced to alter, sometimes in quite radical ways, how we represent the world to ourselves." (1989:240). Harvey points out that many of the transportation and communication technologies advanced by capitalist corporations have had the effect of shrinking space. Spatial barriers have been overcome largely through speedier methods of sending material goods, information, and people. As distance has been overcome, time too becomes compressed.

Our social spaces are more and more designed and built by capitalist firms to facilitate greater efficiency of transactions with customers. Wal*Mart, like the large grocery megamarkets it competes against, has worked hard to streamline the purchasing/exiting function, so as not to slow up the transactions that may follow. Soon, we may well see a supermarket like the one shown in this 1999 IBM ad which follows a trench coated man who walks up and down the aisles grabbing goods and stuffing them in his pockets. Egged on by the dramatic music and the surveillance camera catching his image as he stuffs his pockets full, we might assume that he is shoplifting. And as he exits the store, the voice of the security guard calls out from behind him, "Excuse me sir...You forgot your receipt." The speed and invisibility of total scanning technologies permits the abolition of "check out lines"—one of the time vortices of everyday life in the modern world. Firms like this will introduce the entire shopping cart barcode scanner— self service (elimination of labor costs) and greater speed of transaction in one move, not to mention the extension of the panoptic capacity of the company, and the elimination of shoplifting.

Most of our electronic devices are dedicated to speeding things up—more CPU power can mean more cycles per second, and hence more "work" and greater productivity. In a world obsessed with cutting out wasted time and going faster, experience may grow more and more ephemeral and fragmented. Harvey's concern is that spatial and temporal relations become so destabilized as a result of constant flux that these can provide little in the way of

anchoring social relations and social formations (Harvey 1989: 238 239). This tension is heightened by the fact that abstract spaces relentlessly peck away at, and replace, places. Though we are loath to romanticize "place," we do agree with Harvey that this historical process draws out "place bound nostalgias" (1989: 218).

Many corporate ads in our database seek to represent space time compression either as a product of high technologies, or as a function of globalized business. They depict globalization as a serial montage of landscapes. In the video strings of landscapes that frequently make up these ads, each scene carries roughly the same weight or significance as that which precedes it or that which follows. These landscapes suggest spaces defined by equivalency, bound together by the ad, and by extension, the sponsor. The panoramic version of this landscape style was evident in a 1995 AT&T ad depicting the integration of China into the world system. Time and space appear to dissolve as variables, so that the space of a Chinese peasant can appear to be simultaneous with that of an urban apartment in a North American city because now it's all "one world." The various spaces referred to in this ad are all signified as abstractions —carefully simulated, over stylized backdrops. Telephony is presented as the means of shrinking and overcoming the barrier of distance. A solo male voice draws out this sentiment in song, "it's all within your reach." And a reassuring male voice over offers this closing summary: "AT&T. That's your true choice."

In this vision of technologically integrated globalism, AT&T wants less to assert the primacy of space over place, than to deny that speed is antithetical to geographical territory. According to AT&T's cosmology of globalism, advanced telecommunications do not displace geographically located cultural identities, but instead unify them—leaving intact the cultural primacy of territory, but overcoming all its limits.

The vision of social relations emoted throughout the AT&T ad campaign is colored by humanistic connotations of spirituality. The music orchestrates a sweet (almost saccharine) version of spiritual fulfillment as rooted in caring personal relations in a world characterized by the global separation of families and kin groups. What goes unsaid here is that these people are likely separated by the dynamics of labor migration prompted by now global capitalist labor markets. But this does nothing to diminish the AT&T claim that they have deployed the civil technology to reunite that which capitalism stretched asunder.

We have previously dubbed ads like this as legitimation ads because of the way they ideologically promote an institutional system. "AT&T. That's your true choice." "it's all one world."

Real Time and Time Space Compression

In the discourse of corporate advertising, the subject of real time comes up in relation to various agendas: 1) general issues of competition in the marketplace, where speed becomes its own justification and where faster to market means more profits; 2) the immediacy of computerized stock trading brings the promise of lower costs and premise of fairer exchanges 3) organizing complex and far flung divisions of labor within a globally extensive corporate world; 4) being able to monitor sales and inventory supplies on a daily and even hourly basis in order to control costs and integrate systems management; 5) the video simulacrum where time space compression is achieved via the magic of cameras and computers.

A 2001 IBM ad addresses the rationale of "real time" directly as a matter of profit imperatives. IBM's spokesman situates the question of real time in an ominous and menacing tone:

Here the hegemony of real time is presented as a hostile necessity, as a fait accompli driven by inexorable market forces that cannot be resisted or debated. A meta narrative of speed weaves itself into narrative assumptions regarding competitive markets. The voracious and the insatiable appetites of market growth demand greater speed in the circulation of Capital. The forces of capital driven markets are also likened to the laws of nature—"Time waits for no man or woman or business . . . everything faster. Products to market, ideas to profits." The IBM ad unfolds this way, offering an almost structural Marxian interpretation of how the underlying forces of capitalism become more and more determinant in the decisions and choices that actors must make. Here we have the contradictions of capital circulation—as capital matures and there is greater competition and profit margins grow thinner, then being able to do things faster makes a lot of sense—faster to market brings with it competitive advantage and offsets the tendency for the rate of profit to decline. But going faster carries its own price, it takes competition into the realm of circulation time. But panic marketing offers a quick way out—"powerful software" (scientific magic) can tame the imperatives of market speed by controlling real time—the absolute present.

Telecommunications companies intent on selling the technologies of bandwidth situate the mastery of real time in terms of the immediate availability of all knowledge, anywhere and anytime. For firms like Qwest, real time refers to the totality of instantaneous consumption options available in the here and now. No need for deferred gratification here. In the universe depicted by corporate advertising all stages of the capital circulation process begin

to be characterized in a similar way—one can consume instantly, trade stocks instantly (e*trade and Ameritrade), make markets instantly (NYSE), distribute goods overnight (UPS and FedEx), and share ideas instantly (AT&T). Hence the insistent repetition of the 1999 NYSE ad campaign's choral refrain—"Right here. Right now. Right here. Right now."

To investors, the speed of a trade's execution is all important. The trade that takes place in real time is the holy grail, insofar as all market information is time sensitive. The bid and ask quotes of ten minutes ago can be a liability if a trade takes that long to execute. The slower the transaction of trade request, the less advantaged one is in the marketplace. Hence, the transaction speed of brokers becomes a signifying highlight in their competition for business. One Datek ad from 2000 takes viewers on an imaginary trip inside the electronic circuitry and pathways that constitute the computerized innards of the trading system, inviting viewers to experience the simulated speed of an electronic transaction just as if you were on the ride itself. Datek then promised that every trade would be executed within 60 seconds; by 2004 Ameritrade guarantees the market execution of orders in 5 seconds or less!

AT&T's 2001 commercial for its broadband network services presented real time in relation to organizational efficiency and the task of reconnecting the various elements of a now globally dispersed division of outsourced labor, thus also casting real time in terms of time space compression. Visually and aurally this ad shrinks the global landscape in relation to the matter of speed—conceiving a strictly bounded world in which the flows of information, goods and people are restricted by neither time nor distance. Such commercials also speak to the time space compression implicit in both electronic communications and globalization. According to AT&T "real time connectivity" means that a decentralized corporate division of labor dispersed across the planet can interface seamlessly and "boundlessly."

AT&T visually compresses spatial distance by presenting the world system on a scale comparable to that of a model train. Indeed, the speed of connectivity is presented metaphorically in terms of train speed—a form of modern transport that helped initiate time space compression. Like technologies of telephonic long distance, technologies of railroads and trucking aimed at conquering the limitations of distance by reducing transit time. Advertisers deploy imagery of earlier technologies in an effort to make comprehensible a new stage of communications technology that claims to transcend altogether the limits of time and geographic space.

Like AT&T, other advertisers pursue similar representational strategies to create a tangible picture of the corporate information economy. How does one depict the transport of goods that are not objects? The adoption of the modern train as a visual metaphor for the information economy is not uncommon. GTE's 1998 campaign explicitly linked the train to a multiplicity of landscapes to conjure up the concept of an information economy—an economy in which the most the "most precious cargo" [read commodity] to be moved is "your ideas."

This type of picture seems closely tied to the imagery of a global civil society suffused by a spirit of ideas. It moves them via long distance, wireless, video, internet, directories and local telephone lines. it's a company you might have thought was just a telephone company . . . . Until now— GTE. Fig. 6 Microsoft 2002 prosperity, civility, peace and freedom from want or conflict. It is interesting that such an aggressively competitive marketplace could be shown as giving rise to a civil society that seems marked precisely by the absence of competitive conflicts. Indeed, in stark contrast to the speed of technology and business, the relationships of civil society seem caught in a time warp. Jean Baudrillard addresses speed from almost every angle of his musings—from his theory of simulacra to the paradoxes of history. For Baudrillard history has come to a standstill, even though its internal mechanism whips along at hyperspeed. Indeed for Baudrillard it is the logic of hyperspeed that has arrested history. The mechanism is similar to the weed killer known as Roundup that so accelerates the growth of the plant that it exhausts the weed, killing it.

Corporate ads (as opposed to consumer goods ads) also seem to present a curious "end of history" and an "end of ideology" (as absurd as this might seem given the news of the day). Advertising envisions an end to history made possible by the mastery of speed in the marketplace. Given that this is a post Fordist economy, the question of speed in business has to do less with production processes than with the circulation time of exchange. The biggest difference between the cosmology presented in the ads and that of Baudrillard is that in the ads, hyperspeed produces not a living death, but a virtual paradise on earth. Hence the curious propensity for so much slow motion in television ads that aim to signify the advantages of speed in our lives. Whereas economic time speeds up in these representations, turning laborers into a ghostly blur, consumers/citizens live at an almost pastoral pace in civil society.

Microsoft also offers a real time solution to the problems of business integration in a global marketplace. Microsoft refers to its solution as "one degree of separation." Here speed is depicted through total calmness and control. In one ad, an accident in a wine storage room occurs, and even as the bottles are falling and breaking in slow motion, a manager in Asia using a handheld device reacts to the sharp and immediate spike in prices for the wine as

supply is diminished elsewhere in the supply chain. Distance and time are no longer obstacles to perfect information flows necessary to both inventory controls and integrating supply and demand. Global markets across space and time become unified and synchronized. Speed, or rather the perception of speed, also disappears because it is no longer necessary to accentuate speed when there is but one singular space—one degree of separation.

Friction Free Flow

Accumulation is a temporal activity. Decades of state regulations of industries brought a political backlash of deregulation in the Reagan era precisely because business interests complained that government bureaucracy created so much friction in the conduct of markets that profits were restricted. As capitalism matures and becomes dominant, rates of profit become more and more difficult to sustain. Many commercials for telecommunications, computing, internet and software portray the solution in the use of new technologies to both accelerate and integrate the cycle of production. Productivity is seen as a function of the velocity of the flow of objects, goods, personnel, services, signs, and data that move through organizations and extra organizational systems. But how fast can the flow move before systems break down? On the flip side, what are the obstacles and friction points that limit or restrict velocity?

What happens when the unexpected occurs? Can an organization respond in a flexible and timely manner? It is no longer enough that an organization run efficiently. Efficiency must now extend beyond organizational structures into the world of supply and demand. In a marketplace where consumers come armed with "smart" credit cards and wireless technology and are encouraged to expect that all commodities and services will be within 24 hours reach, corporations are expected to design friction free response mechanisms. On the other side of the supply chain, B2B technology providers promise just in time delivery of production materials as needed. Flexible, friction free integration of the supply chain is an of repeated mantra in the contemporary corporate world. Advertising reflects this in two ways. IBM commercials often depict episodes of failed integration in which corporate employees and executives confront system breakdown. Against the backdrop of overwhelming anxiety associated with failure and the threat of job loss, IBM presents itself as providing the services that can keep complex technological systems from failing. On the other hand, with an upbeat musical score in the background, Siemens' commercials show Siemens' systems responding fluidly to Last minute changes in corporate decisions. The imagery of integrated instantaneity permits undisturbed production to continue seamlessly.

The premise of a friction free economy harkens back to Adam Smith's model of a market driven by an "invisible hand" that assumes all market participants share complete access to unrestricted information flows and act rationally. This is an assumption that even Thomas Hobbes would have rejected, recognizing that power comes not simply from having access to all relevant information, but that power often comes to those actors who can take advantages of disrupted and uneven flows of information. Indeed, the rationally maximizing market agent is one who may in fact instigate bottlenecks and delays to maximize self interest.

Using representations that blend speed and integration, the UPS "Brown" branding campaign promises integrated supply chain management. The campaign depicts persons positioned at different points in the corporate hierarchy: CEO, CFO, logistics manager, shipping manager, and the mailroom guy. Each figure speaks to UPS's ability to ensure the proper rate and flow of data and materials under their supervision/surveillance. Speakers link UPS's integrated system to reduced levels of personal anxiety in their work lives. A smooth running system proves therapeutic.

In War in the Age of Intelligent Machine, Manuel DeLanda states that "...a commander must track the points at which friction may be dispersed within tactical, command systems in order to preserve the efficiency and integrity of a war machine during battle" (DeLanda 1991: 61). The role of the commander is to disperse "the "friction" (delays, bottlenecks, noisy data) produced by the fog of war" (DeLanda 1991: 23).

In this UPS ad the CEO confidently states that he is able to both track "minute by minute" and to anticipate unexpected events (a herd of zebras cross in front of a herd of elephants) in order to avoid chaos and disaster because UPS provides the necessary supportive structure. Moreover, like other corporate representatives depicted throughout this campaign he seems anxiety free.

Not only must the organizational apparatus run friction free, it must also at any given moment have the appropriate personnel along the supply chain to locate the position of any object (or the data simulation of the object) as it moves through the process. UPS presents itself as self contained system that will accelerate the flow of objects and data while simultaneously tracking every element. Scanning technology and tracking numbers function to position every object in the flow. Increasingly, this technology has been applied to human movement across borders, through airport terminals, across toll bridges (EZ Pass), at cash registers, etc. Ironically, the need for speed results in

an expanded demand for panoptic control.

Speed of Capital

In the Communist Manifesto, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1848/1978) penned the famous phrase, "All that is solid melts into air." Already in 1848, so soon into the era of Capital, Marx and Engels had noticed Capital's propensity (under the direction of the Bourgeoisie) for an accelerated pace of change. Later, when Marx wrote about labor time as the central determinant of exchange value, he dwelt on the fact that speed would be a crucial variable in the development of capitalist political economies. Still, Marx might have understated the degree to which a labor theory of value is dependent on a theory of speed—or more properly, a theory of accelerating production. Teresa Brennan's (1993) reexamination of Marx's argument explicitly recognizes the role of space and distance in the value composition process. Drawing on the theory that labor is the source of all value, Marx focused the labor theory of value on a critique of exploitation—with special emphasis on the character of capitalist exploitation. Within his argument about the structural character of unequal exchange, Marx showed how capitalists recognized time, or more specifically, labor time as the crucial measure of value in its reified form—namely money. That way, Capital could make every diverse form of labor commensurate with a universal standard of measure. The category of wage labor rests precisely upon abstracting out from any particular kind of labor the time expended in labor as measured in hours and minutes. Our measures of efficiency depend on this.

Those following in the tradition of Marx observed that Capitalists have historically sought to wrest (exploit) more value from labor by means of "the speedup." In pointing to the exploitative power relationship that drives speedups, this Marxian tradition has located these as class struggles between Capital and Labor over power on the factory floor. And yet, though class conflict was the practical matter at hand, there was more than class conflict at work here—because speedups of production also aimed at overcoming another fundamental contradiction of capital accumulation.

Marx pointed to the general speedup in production processes when he addressed the contradiction between the commodity form and the dead time that occurred in the cycle of commodity production, distribution, sales and reinvestment. Marx variously referred to this phase of Capital in the circuitry of circulation as "fallow time" or time "at rest"— but his point was always that such time represented "negated" Capital (Marx 1973: 546; 621; Harvey, 1982: 85). When Capital takes the form of stock inventories, this is time when Capital cannot be "at work."

Delays in the circulation of the commodity through its cycle represent opportunity costs, for any time that the commodity form spends in warehouses, or sitting on shelves, means that the money equivalent of that commodity could not be reinvested and "earning" more return on equity. In short, time spent in circulation is time not spent in production or commodity realization. David Harvey puts it this way:

> There is, therefore, considerable pressure to accelerate the velocity of circulation of capital, because to do so is to increase the sum of values produced and rate of profit. The barriers to realization are minimized when the "transition of capital from one phase to the next" occurs "at the speed of thought" (Marx 1973:631). The turnover time of capital is, in itself, a fundamental measure which also indicates certain barriers to accumulation. Since an accelerating rate of turnover of capital reduces the time during which opportunities pass by unseized, a reduction in turnover time releases resources for further accumulation (Harvey 1982: 86).

Marx defined circulation time in terms of how long it takes to "realize the value embodied in the commodity through the exchange process" (Harvey 1982: 62). The speed and efficiency of the transformation of the commodity form of capital into the money capital is pivotal to the reproduction/expansion of Capital (Harvey 1982:71).

In the century and a half since Marx began writing, Capital has come up with many new institutional mechanisms for overcoming drags on commodity reproduction. The massification of the credit system in the early 20th century still stands out as a dramatic intervention. The nurturing of marketing and advertising systems to stoke up additional demand for goods comprises another familiar approach. Each successful intervention was soon mimicked by competitors, and thus each advancement in shortening cycle time contributed to a further quickening of commodity circulation, until today speed and turnover are the watchwords of the Marketplace.

Speed has as its referent not just time but also distance. Speed refers not only to how quickly or slowly the digital pulse of a timepiece moves, but also to movement across space. For firms like FedEx and UPS the question of speed refers to how fast they can transport goods from one geographic site to another place. FedEx and UPS have defined themselves as supply chain management specialists. They claim to be able to move as fast as is necessary to keep up with the integrated global supply chain in such a way that clients can minimize warehousing costs.

For companies like Intel in the semiconductor chip manufacturing sector the question of speed refers to how rapidly a processor can cycle and cycle again, and to the way in which Moore's Law continues to play itself out (Moore's Law states that chip capacity doubles every eighteen months). Measured in Gigahertz, every corporate research group is competing to build the fastest chip yet.

For firms like Amazon.com, the question of speed refers to the absence of time spent in physical infrastructures—the effort to overcome the idle time of products sitting on a shelf that Marx referred to as a barrier to value realization. Amazon.com's business model touted its being an Internet business—the store on line as opposed to the more prosaic land locked storefronts—land and buildings have rents, taxes and insurance costs associated with them, while Amazon's cyberbusiness promised consumers nearly immediate shipment of the books at discounted prices. Why leave the house, when we can rush it to you?

Teresa Brennan (1993:147;150) observes that "speed, measured by distance as well as time, involves a linear axis, time, and the lateral axis of space." Brennan's point is that the space time of short term profit comes into conflict with the "generational time of natural reproduction" and that in the struggle to overcome the contradictions of the profit mechanism, the market driven space time of speed eventually displaces (she says "takes the place of") generational time."

Brennan's distinction hinges on the assumption that generational time is a biological constant. But is it? Not according to the mass media— which with their own axe to grind have held that generational time itself has undergone a speedup in recent decades, shrinking adolescence into a series of fashion cycles. This prompts concerns about how children are growing up too fast, losing out on the romance and innocence of childhood. Generational time itself has been turned into a commodity and is thus subject to the same internal pressures as any other commodity.

Brennan builds her argument on an opposition—a contradiction between the "competing dynamics" of 1) the Speed of Capital, driven by the demand to realize short term profits and further Capital formation, and 2) the existence of a Natural Order, whose rate of reproduction must remain relatively constant (1993:133). The premise of a natural order driven by biological imperatives seems to us problematic. Isn"t such recourse to claims regarding "Natural Entities" yet another socially constructed fantasy, although always important nonetheless, precisely because it is social fantasy? Maybe it is one of our most important collective fantasies, a need to believe that we are part of some natural history.

Brennan's theory poses the contradiction stemming from the Speed of Capital in terms of the postulate of "organic time." Is this organic time, the pace at which generational change takes place, a question of empirical reality or metaphysics? Indeed, why pose the social contradictions of speed in such Rousseauian terms? Is it because it assumes something of Marx's critical ideal of "species being?"

Perhaps because we still want to believe that our most inherent sensibilities will prompt us to snap back against mounting forms of capitalist alienation, this argument about a fundamental schism between the accelerating cycle time of commerce and the "natural" time of organic life becomes inviting. The myth of organic time beckons because it offers the prospect of achieving a form of spiritual salvation.

Blurred Labor Time

A 2001 Cisco commercial hypes the ability of Cisco Systems to integrate a just in time production system for manufacturing and shipping bicycles. Located in a warehouse/production facility, the commercial distorts and speeds up motion to create an impression of hyperactive productivity. Most of the movement takes place around a packing crate (the primary signifier for on time inventory). The music races along, relentlessly hyperactive, edgy but energetic, framing a manufacturing and shipping process that also races along in a blur of motion. We also see what appears to be a snippet of a speeded up assembly line of bicycle production. Once again, both the method of signifying speed and the ultimate signifier of speed is time lapse photography. Though time is accelerated, space is held constant here as the camera circles the men and the packing crate. Space is held constant, while technology races to eclipse temporal limits, and with them the asynchronous dilemmas—i.e., inventory problems, too late, too soon bottlenecks that cut into operating margins. Of course, the goal and the achievement in the advertising narrative is to get as close as possible to friction less synchronous time.

The speed of an Internet facilitated just in time production process is simulated by the acceleration of the video. Here speed is depicted through video time compression. The technique is hardly new, but it is pivotal to the representation—film a day's worth of activity and compress it down to 15 seconds. What remains is the perceptible blur of meaningful activity, rather than the meaningful specificity of the activity itself. And yet as the ad winds down, as it seeks to drive home its message about gaining control over the inventory process, the music calms and soothes

out, just as the video slows to focus on a title frame that reads, "Inventory management on the Internet." This gives way to a computer screen showing part inventories and an image of the "black widow [bicycle] crank." This image brings us to a sequence of two nearly still scenes of an older worker (a craftsman) checking a bicycle wheel as it slowly rotates, followed by someone wearing a welder's mask poised as if welding a frame.

Why does Cisco follow the imagery of a high speed workspace with two portraits of craftsman like characters? The pace and duration of these scenes lead us to perceive the persistence of craft in production. But why? There is a hint of nostalgia here in this moment of apparent stillness, albeit a nostalgia for the future of a computer system facilitated craftsmanship. This mythological "return of craft" is a product of a semiotic opposition between the faceless blur of a workday in which, truly, workers have become just another factor of production (Braverman 1976). By contrast, the image of an older male's face suggests the revival of craftsmanship because it is, by far, the least abstracted image in the commercial. Indeed, Cisco suggests that harnessing the power of the Internet returns the face of humanity to work. While all other workers have been blurred into fleeting anonymity, his is the only face recognizable as such, the only face on which we can see the traces of motivated subjectivity. And yet he performs no activity—we only see him looking at the wheel, not producing it. An ensuing image of a welder as a signifier of a skilled producer is also mobilized strictly for the purpose of signifying the craftworker, since he merely feigns the act of work.

This last portion of the ad aims to distinguish pure speed from controlled and managed speed. One message that may be taken from this ad is that a competitive advantage can be gained in synchronizing the division of labor via the Internet as a technology that permits the asynchronous management and coordination of data. Managed time in this worldview permits un alienated labor. What then does this ad have to tell us about working at hyperspeed? What values are being promoted in depicting human labor as a time compressed blur? And what is the relationship between a time compressed labor process that adheres to the competitive logic of capitalist time and the almost paradisiacal craft labor time that Cisco technology makes possible?

The imagery of accelerated human movements in the workplace is not new. Charlie Chaplin's Modern Times captured the shift from craft to assembly production taking place in the 1930's. There, Chaplin worked on an assembly line that was subject to constant speed and panoptic surveillance by an all powerful factory boss. Even the lunch break was automated with an experimental feeding machine designed to adjust the individual to the predetermined movement of objects. Finally, after one too many speed ups Chaplin has a breakdown and runs amok, a wrench in each hand, frantically tightening anything with a bolt. He is finally caught and carted off to a psychiatric hospital. The capitalist dream of high velocity production system reaches a limit: the physiological and psychological limits of the human body. But the logic of capital as Marx demonstrated is to continually speed up production to extract more out of labor. Time motion studies, robotics, electronic surveillance, cube farms, etc. have one end—integrated and accelerated production, distribution, exchange and consumption. Both the practice and the ethos of craft wanes under the continuous assault of demands for efficiency and productivity, and the panoptic sensibility becomes less overtly visible and authoritarian, the boss's eye of Modern Times replaced by Cisco's management systems. What is most intriguing about the difference between Modern Times and the Cisco account of supermodern times is the different tone and attitude toward speed. Whereas Modern Times posed critical questions about the limits of speed in the workplace—about what human beings could tolerate both physically and psychologically—the Cisco ad poses no critical questions about the workplace or the human condition. In fact, it could be argued that Cisco 15/34 presumes that speed goes hand in hand with an unalienated workplace and work experience.

Speed, Simultaneity, and Identity—Casino Cyborg

Critiques of free market capitalism focus on the structure of markets and their relationship to social institutions. The instability and volatility of active markets can devalue the economic base of real lives, or in more macro scenarios can lead to the collapse of national and regional economies. Susan Strange (1986: 9 10) calls this instability "casino capitalism," a phenomenon she links to five trends: innovations in the way in which financial markets work; the sheer size of markets; commercial banks turned into investment banks; the emergence of Asian nations as players; and the shift to self regulation by banks.

According to Strange the speed at which markets work combined with their now, near universal pervasiveness results in a volatility that extends globally. Approximately $1.5 trillion dollars are invested daily as foreign transactions (Khor 1998: 2). It is estimated that 98 per cent of these transactions are speculative. In The Crisis of Global Capitalism, investment guru George Soros (1998) also highlights the potential for disequilibria in the financial system, and the inability of non market sectors to regulate markets. In False Dawn, John Gray (1998: 74) echoes

that "national governments find themselves in environments not merely of risk but of radical uncertainty." Gray attacks neo liberalism for weakening social and political institutions in both First and Third World nations. "In the late twentieth century there is no shelter—for corporations or for governments—from the global gale of creative destruction." (Gray 1998:76)

The rapidly shifting economy driven by markets has real consequences for the lives of individuals. The velocity of social, economic, and technological change as well as the shifting of ownership in the forms of mergers and takeovers results in an unpredictable relationship with work. In Corrosion of Character, Richard Sennett (1999) explores the impact of flexible capitalism across two generations of workers. For workers in industries as diverse as baking and software engineering, the rules of success have become increasingly illegible and job security increasingly tenuous. Technological innovation drives organizational instability. Shifts in technology can destabilize whole sectors of the economy both eliminating and creating jobs. Sennett describes Rico's effort to hire young tech wizards since his knowledge has become outdated. Risk and uncertainty lurk on the edges of one's work. Adapting to the volatility and unpredictability of the economy is difficult and anxiety ridden.

Reflecting market volatility and the creative destruction energies of the technology sector, the shadows of risk and economic uncertainty lurk in the background of this genre of advertising. The risk appears in the form of investment insecurity, failure to innovate technologically, the lack of flexibility and speed, or being overwhelmed by information. Ironically, the bottom stratum most susceptible to financial volatility is absented from these commercials. The risk experienced is by investors or by executives. But with risk there is opportunity.

This is precisely the premise of an IBM ad (2000) that features a young businessman sitting on a bench surrounded by pigeons in an Italian Square. He is wearing a voice activated computer. As he excitedly buys and sells commodities and jumps into the air, pigeons take flight. After his last sale, his computer phone rings and he lets his wife (or girlfriend) know the meeting went well and he is taking the next flight home.

> "Traveling light, rather than holding tightly to things deemed attractive for their reliability and solidity—that is, for their heavy weight, substantially and unyielding power of resistance—is no asset of power." (Bauman, 1999: 13)

Capital flows everywhere and this new highly mobile elite both aids it and travels as lightly as capital does. Our young entrepreneur travels light in many senses. First, his technology is light, a wearable computer with a wireless connection to both the Internet and global communication network. The computer screen is a miniaturized for the eye. The computer itself is not visible. Voice activation frees his hands to feed pigeons as he interacts with a global economy. Second, his relationship to space is light. He sits on a bench in front of St. Mark's Basilica. An operatic background connects images of St. Mark's Basilica with the selling of commodities. The space is weighted with connotations of sacredness and tradition. And yet, our young entrepreneur has no relationship to history or meanings associated with it. Third, this space affords him emotional freedom. Could he express such emotion in an office space? He is freed from organizational restraints on personality and demeanor. Fourth, his relationship to the commodity market is speculative. The tonal structure of his voice mimics the excitement of the crap table. The ad captures a psychological dimension of casino capitalism. Winning the game has intrinsic emotional rewards for the player. Fifth, his relationship to family is expressed nonchalantly as if he were down at the corner grocery store. It does not seem to matter that he is in Italy. These nomads do not have ties to community but to a scaled down nuclear family.

Donna Haraway (1991) refers to "a cyborg as a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction." IBM's cyborg is juiced on adrenalin, his methamphetamine like buzz designed to match the speed of the market. His animated, out of breath style mimics the speed of capital and the kind of competitive excitement that goes with it. He wheels and deals in the hypercommodity markets of commodities futures. Here one needs to don the cyborg apparatus just to stay abreast of the speed of the marketplace. Being a cyborg is a response to acceleration.

Speed and Everyday Life

Advertisements reference numerous kinds of time. In their efforts to reference everyday life, advertisements may portray the time of consumption, the time of labor, the time of capital and markets, the time of reproduction, family time, and the time of transit. We offer these as heuristic categories, recognizing that there is overlap between

these representations in advertising.

An example from AT&T illustrates an effort to draw together the multiple spheres of time in everyday life. The ad hails middle class women who perform the roles of working mom. "If this is you," yours can be a harried day, divided into distinct blocks of time, each dedicated to a scheduled activity. The typically busy day may begin with a run across the great wide open of the Western landscape to keep one's body and mind fit. This is labeled "breakfast," and it is followed by an image of a commuter plane labeled as "your carpool." We begin by peeling away one scene at a time, because each scene has been selected as a way of signifying the elements of a fast paced daily life. So after you take a commuter flight to the city where you work, you check in with your wealth o meter— the "scoreboard" of stock prices, for this has become your measure of well being.

From here, the pace of urban nightlife starts to get pumped up by a techno beat on the soundtrack. Visually the ad draws on the now standard signifier of speed—the blurring, pulsing beams of light, produced by using time lapse photographic techniques of urban traffic to stretch out time visually. We have captured this sequence of scenes and edits from the ad—but we have reduced the number of frames, slowed it down and isolated it from the signifiers on the sound track. This permits us to defuse the speed—not because we want to downplay it, but because we want to highlight how viewers "read" the codes for expressing speed. The pulses of light identified onscreen as "your sandbox"—these are supposedly the space and speed coordinates of your daily life.

What does "this is your sandbox" suggest? This is the place where you play? This is where you are the master? The maestro? The connoisseur of consumption in the global city? You are at home here, you are comfortable here? But how does one feel at home in the blurring speeds of green light bursts?

The question the ad poses is whether or not "you" have the tools to keep this lifestyle from flying apart at the seams. The lifestyle in question refers to a suburban, neo country space where women raise families by scheduling their days into personal time, transit time, market time, work time, and family time. AT&T's message is that "finally communications has caught up with the way you live." Under the campaign rubric of "AT&T's personal network," this commercial translates the struggle to keep spatially scattered everyday lifeworlds integrated into well adjusted and fulfilling family lives into a story of heroic vitality and celebration. Speed and busy ness of schedules are turned from negatives into the glue of daily life. Where normally having too much to do in too little time in too many places is a recipe for stress and anxiety, the AT&T ad turns the psychology of stress into imagery of heroic vitality and accomplishment. The ad celebrates (toasts) the individual woman who accomplishes the impossible everyday, and does it with a smile. This is a woman who is more full of love for her family at the end of the day than at its beginning; this is a woman able to balance the pressures of professional performance with being a loving parent, a woman who can be everywhere at once.

> ...Networks are appropriate instruments for a capitalist economy based on innovation, globalisation, and decentralised concentration; for work, workers and firms based on flexibility; for a culture of endless deconstruction and reconstruction; for a polity geared towards the instant processing of new values and public moods; and for a social organisation aiming at the supersession of space and the annihilation of time (Castells 1996:470 71).

Time overwhelms space in AT&T's ad. It does not so much eclipse space as to "fold" it back in itself to form a new kind of space. Here, for example, the spatially dispersed family now appears in its sublated form—connected by communications devices rather than actually occupying the same space. Visually, the ad makers signify the eclipse of place/space by carving the temporal frame into three simultaneous parts—one holds your significant other, the second symbolizes your baby (children), and the last is you—or at least, your hands doing the communicating. The network holds together your life —in this sense, the ad offers a therapeutic solution to speed insofar as the network becomes the means for holding together the nuclear family. The need for a therapeutic moment is acknowledged in the humorous reference to "your analyst," which turns out to be the family dog. Of course, as Sigmund Freud observed, jokes often reveal more of ourselves than we are normally disposed to show. Your pet dog as your analyst is funny because it might be the truest moment in the commercial. It is at once a clever way of acknowledging the necessity of some therapeutic time and space in a world as hectic as this one is, while also admitting that maybe things aren"t so socially and psychologically perfect. After all, if the only one you can really talk to honestly is the dog... hmmm, how much good is a new package of communications services going to do?

AT&T defines its new product as a highly flexible, customized communications solution for "the way you live." They name their service, "the personal network." What is the relationship between self and network? AT&T sounds confident that whatever its nature, it will change "forever, the way you communicate." The last scenes offer a visual representation of the new way of communicating—the relationship conducted between two mobile communications

users. Wireless and mobile, they chat and correspond in transit. Making use of otherwise "wasted" time, they redefine the way they communicate. Is it any accident that the male in this pairing appears as an isolated individual in the most abstracted of spaces?

Saving Time and Accelerated Consumption

> *"It goes real fast but it sure feels good."*
> *"It goes real fast but it sure feels good."*
> *"It goes real fast but it sure feels good."*
> – *Reverend Horton Heat "Texas Rockabilly Rebel"*

Given the obvious consumption bias of most advertising, it is hardly surprising that a major pitch concerning time has to do with speed of delivery, speed of service, speed of cook time, speed of bill paying. This Chase Bank ad takes a carefree, almost humorous, approach to touting their on line banking service as giving you, the consumer, "more time bonding" which is visually defined as having fast and furious fun with your loved ones.

In this narrative, one gets to pursue pleasure frenetically with one's "honey" or children or pets. people's leisure consumption space is defined as a are free to spend less time with their money and more time with their honey. With new Chase on line banking, it's so easy to check balances, transfer money, pay bills [pause]—on your time, wherever you are. So spend less time banking and more time bonding. Open a Chase better banking account and get free Chase on line banking. Chase. The right relationship is everything. realm of freedom—a freedom from the demands of managing money, especially the amount of free time that it consumes. But with Chase's on line banking service, people "all the world over" can now be "free to spend less time with their money" (the world of necessity) "and more time with their honey" (the world of personal choice). Or, as they put it, banking made "easy." The promise of well managed technology once again claims to increase our spheres of freedom by giving back to us our time, wherever we are.

Notice how, in the ad, the time of bill paying becomes calmer and slower, and seems almost to be ceasing, while the time of being with one's loved ones accelerates. People like us zoom along in these scenes, carrying canoes over their heads, devouring pizza and pancakes, being "wacky" and fun. The pace of their consumption seems to be linked to the pleasure they appear to be experiencing. Speed, as it is represented here, signifies both personal mobility and thrilling pleasures.

You must have wondered by now about why leisure would need to be consumed in such accelerated bursts? What background assumptions premise your interpretation of this ad? Go back through it now, if you would, and consider the assumptions the ad makes about you. How does it address you? What does the ad assume, if anything, about the amount of time spent working and the amount of time spent on taking care of the many necessities of daily life? And how are these related to family, leisure and the subject of personal freedom?

Our own interpretation of the ad begins with Juliet Schor's (1991) study, The Overworked American. Schor's research debunks the notion that Americans have progressively more free time at their disposal. In the last decade, hours worked per week have actually increased, making home life a bit more harried. Moreover, an increasing number of households depend on more than one income. Here it is not simply a matter of working more, but also a matter of integrating schedules. And when we factor in the necessity of 'reproduction' activities (cleaning, washing, cooking, repairing, shopping, and indeed, paying bills), free time becomes even scarcer. Hence, it makes some sense to represent consumption as a time of energetic expression. But there is another dimension to this as well. There is a sense in which such representations address the reality of consumption oriented to immediate gratification— the satisfactions of such consumption are relatively short lived, and even at that, incessant pursuit of immediate gratification may indeed contribute to a declining half life of consumption based gratifications. No single act of consumption is sufficient to achieve satisfaction; rather consumption must be engaged continuously. Here the immediacy of frenetic gratification forms the flip side of political economic necessity—for the economy to function efficiently there must be ever expanding consumption. Speed is fun, as the lyrics from The Reverend Horton Heat emphatically declare. And while excessive speed may strike some as rebellious, it also takes shape in the underbelly of conformist consumption. As repetitive as they are is, the lyrics speak to more than just the pleasure of speed; they also speak to hyperactive addiction.

Capital's Codes of Speed

The twentieth century witnessed accelerating speed in both the capital accumulation process and the cultural circulation process necessary to keep a system of commodities continuously moving along—relentlessly spurred along by the pressure of reporting ever improving fiscal quarter after fiscal quarter. And not just moving along, but growing at a rate that attracts investors who seek the high multiples of price/earnings ratios. Inflated multiples represented very high expectations of future earnings, which in turn spurs pressure to grow profits in a clockwork fashion.

In this institutional framework we conceptualize advertising as promoting a "cultural economy of signs." We believe that the cultural economy bears a structural resemblance to the conventional economy which gave birth to it. Advertisers seek to invest goods and services with iconic difference and value to make them stand out. The more vigorously sponsors compete, the greater their risk of oversaturating image markets. In this competitive image environment, companies resort to more and more rapid image turnover. A frenetic competition has unfolded amongst the corporate advertising industry as they race to stylistically differentiate the value of one good (a commodity) over another. Advertising is an industry that tries to build values by rearranging "the meanings of things. By tearing "meanings" from their contexts and stitching them back together advertising seeks to establish commodity symbols. But the constant circulation of cultural references needed to serve these engines of profit also runs the risk of devolving into a stew of meaninglessness.

For most of the twentieth century, critical social thinkers worried about the consequences of organizing cultural spheres of meaning around the operating logic of the commodity form. After nearly a century of treating culture as a range of commodities, we now confront additional layers of historical self contradictions that have taken shape around the practices of commodity culture. Treating culture as a system of commodities seems to have followed a similar path of contradictions to those Karl Marx outlined in the 1857 Grundrisse when speaking about a capitalist economy of industrial production. In the Grundrisse, Marx (1973) demonstrated from one angle after another how the structures of capitalist markets prompt social contradictions that, left untended, might undermine institutions of commodity relations.

During the 20th century, commodity culture came to dominate, first in the US, then in Europe and now globally. In discussions of globalization, the term "Americanization of culture" generally refers to this commodity culture, which grew up first in the US mass media. In our view, this hallmark of the transition to late capitalism shows how the sphere of symbolic interaction has of necessity become increasingly central to the capitalist mode of production. This means that the reproduction of Meaning through languages, whether spoken, or written, or pictorial has become a central part of the process of generating and reproducing value in the global capitalist system.

We have discussed these processes extensively in Sign Wars (1996) and Nike Culture (1998). We have argued that the systematic rerouting of symbolic meaning toward the service of building exchange value lends itself to the dispersion and fragmentation of Meaning. This is because processes of cultural commodification feed an accelerating circulation of meaning in the sphere of culture.

The technology of digital reproduction has transformed industry after industry, and it now drives markets—especially stock markets that we view as public and intersubjectively negotiated social spaces. This same digital revolution has also transformed the tools for producing and displaying electronic culture. Hence in order to make our case, we must examine the intensifying digitalization of cultural space both as a material force in the expansion of global capitalism and simultaneously as a representational force.

So advertising culture is not only accelerating, it also seeks to represent economic speed as our already emergent future. In the commercials mentioned above, speed has become synonymous with Progress. Such advertising casts the future in terms of the benefits to be enjoyed by harnessing technologies of speed. Ultimately for the consumer, this is the speed of delivery—of pizza, prescription drugs, information, and movies. Particularly around the emergent Internet, what's important is the speed at which data move. Qwest ads from 1999 2000 are a case in point: "Moving at the speed of light."

The Speed of Information—Decoding Beams of Light

Think for a moment of not one ad but the entire mix of ads that you have seen. What unites them is a common language of advertising—consisting of codes and formulas. Corporate advertising routinely uses specific signifiers to represent some form of speed. Time must be a visual concept in the world of television advertising, though the visual codes are usually supported by sound effects and music. Once time is given representation, time is never again

neutral; it now has an ideological dimension.

Signifiers of speed take multiple forms. Referential signifiers take an object that can be photographed or filmed to connote speed— e.g, a "speeding" bullet, or a motorcycle, or a beam of light. Cinematic signifiers are film techniques used to speed up motion either within a shot or externally, the length of time shots are held, or how much the photographic technique "warps" the usual relations of time and space. Referential signifiers generally are given perceptual velocity by cinematic techniques. For example, the speed of light cannot be signified without referring to the frozen traces left behind by blurred light paths. The blurred speeding path of streaming or pulsing light is especially appealing to advertisers because it also offers a metaphor for information flows in an information economy.

Cinematic devices are used to create an illusion of perceptual speed by appearing to accelerate the velocity of the moving image to the point that recognition of image content moves ever closer to the threshold of perception. The viewer's eye strains to keep up with the movement and, when accelerated to extreme velocities, may not be able to decipher actual physical referents. The internal rhythm of a shot is accelerated by having objects or persons move quickly across the frame, time lapse photography, swish pan camera movements, or rapidly shifting lens focal length—the zoom. Each technique creates a blur. Blurring is a form of abstraction in which the accelerated speed of the quotidian disguises the boredom of the everyday (see Lefebvre 1974).

Light beams seem an ideal signifier because fiber optics utilize laser beams to carry packets of information. Moreover, the success of the information economy is contingent on reliable and rapid flows of information that are instantaneously available on demand. Companies that design or maintain networks often use the light beam to visually demonstrate the superiority of a particular network. Beams of light often shoot through electronic circuitry or across the metaphoric landscape of the semiconductor microchip.

Beams of light moving through a physical landscape have to do with meanings about the "annihilation of space by time"—about collapsing distance by bridging it with instantaneity. Here, a favorite signifier used by advertisers to signify SPEED is time lapse photography of highway traffic at night. The technique came of age in a film, "Koyanasquatsi," and has since become a clichéd metaphor for the speed of life in modern society.

Into the Vortex of Hyperdrive

In Star Trek, Captain Kirk would order chief engineer Scotty to send the Starship Enterprise into hyperspace at warp speed—a momentary burst of light trails signified the starship's escape from the usual forces of nature that limit us to the speed of light. Kubrick used this technique in 2001: A Space Odyssey to signify the passage of humankind through its next evolutionary stage. Pop science presentations often conclude with this abstracted imagery of streaks of light bursting outwards into a distant vortex of the future.

In modernist art and design, stream lines displace the heavy physical referents of conventional realism. Many corporate ads turn equations, numbers, binary and genetic codes into visible, but fleeting, signifiers that fly across the ad screen on streaming fields of whitish green or blue lights and enter the mix of abstraction. As signifiers they point back to the power of pure mathematical abstraction, the power of Enlightenment solutions to life's problems. This is the positivist dream that a mathematical equivalent underlies all forms of reality, and once mastered, so too reality can be controlled. As the camera moves toward the vanishing point, this motif suggests we are entering the future at a hyperspeed driven by technological innovation. Some ads complete this cinematic movement with a burst of light, the "dawning of a new age."

The Train as Digital Metaphor

Paradoxically, while corporate advertising for new technologies is full of images of jets, rockets, fiber optic cables, and satellites, it is the train, that early modern signifier of the Industrial Revolution, that seems to be a signifier of choice for the Information Revolution. The train speeding through a landscape is used to signify multiple forms of speed.

As a metaphor for Internet speed, Akamai uses a train speeding across a horizon foregrounded by five monitors replaying the same scene to the chant, "The Internet is faster because of us." Likewise, Nortel juxtaposes the word "faster" over a speeding train to answer their question, "What do you want the Internet to be?" Qwest signifies the capacity of the Internet by sending a stream of fused data hurtling down train tracks that lead into the vortex. MCI WorldCom's opening ad in 1998 self consciously used the railroad as a metaphor for the first stage of American business, and its transition via a burst of light to the networked society and global business scapes.

Time space compression is the image sought by a 2002 AT&T commercial that shows a model train traversing

from one disconnected landscape to another, depicting time space compression of a AT&T managed global network. The commercial ends with a train speeding around its simulated blue globe. While the train once symbolized the national landscape, now it speeds across scenes from various countries and continents. Juxtaposed to the train's former functionality as a mover of heavy goods, GTE uses the imagery of a train to signify the transition to light modernity and the movement of the most precious cargo—ideas—across networks.

Train travel changed perceptions of time and space in the 19th century. Train travel "destroy(ed) the close relationship between the traveler and the traveled space" (Schivelbush 1986:53). "The train was experienced as a projectile, and traveling on it as being shot through the landscape—thus losing control of one's senses" (54). Vision emerged as the dominant sense when travelers watched the landscape fly by, even as their "visual perception was diminished by velocity." (55)

> Panoramic perception, in contrast to traditional perception, no longer belonged to the same space as the perceived objects: the traveler saw the objects, landscapes, etc. through the apparatus that moved him through the world. That machine and the motion it created became integrated into his visual perception: thus he could see only things in motion (Schivelbush 1986:64).

Looking out the window, the foreground blurred away into nothing, leaving an appreciation for the wider landscape. Glimpses and glances— the fragmentary recognition of a moment and the momentary recognition of signifying fragments— emerged as a visual trope for the experience of speed as rapid transit. The landscape was perceptually transformed into a flow of discrete fragments speeding past in a continuous stream separated from the viewer by the window of the train.

How is this different from watching an advertising montage? The flow of the physical landscape from the train window is continuous and contextualized; the flow across the TV monitor is composed of disparate signifiers that, when placed on video tracks, travel across the screen for an almost imperceptible moment. The ghosts or traces of these rapidly moving signifiers register after they have actually left the scene, replaced by others. At best we the viewers inadvertently glance at salient signifiers.

In an earlier stage of modernity, Simmel observed an intensified nervous stimulation in the city, and Schivelbush (1986) notes that 19th century experiences with increased stimulation associated velocity with stress (Georg Simmel, 1950). Just as the urbanite's blasé attitude developed as a buffering response to the accelerating pace of urban life in the early 20th century, by the end of the century audiences grew blasé, about the accelerating velocity of decontextualized signifiers that are cut up and forced through the engines of advertising. On the one hand, this drives sign wars and the attempt to differentiate advertising and brand identity from the overflow of clutter. On the other hand, it is also contributes to clutter itself. Signifying speed accelerates representational flows and boosts the volume of signifying debris.

The Bustling City

When enhanced by time lapse photography shots of human figures, the imagery of exaggerated speed of movement on city streets and sidewalks is often used to establish the pace of modernity. Cars speeding through streets or hordes of pedestrians streaming into buildings or through subways are favorite shots for representing the pace of modern life.

Opening with a burst of light, a 2004 SBC montage depicts a fast moving city life connected by wireless technology. The ad's backdrop is the architecture of modernity: cloverleafs, freeways, revolving doors and escalators. Cinematic techniques such as speeded up superimpositions, bird's eye shots of freeway traffic, and blurred shots of speeding automobiles quicken the pace of the commercial. At times the distorted soft focus and superimposition create a ghostly Kertesz like impression of modernity with its spaces of anonymity. Here we may recognize human subjects but we are spared their subjectivity. The ghostly presences mark them as temporary occupants of non places, as they shuttle through the spaces in between home and work, between an ever more nebulous here and there. SBC's male voiceover celebrates the American frontier experience and the mobility of modern life.

SBC invokes cultural history as a way of narrativizing the imagery of a privatized ghost culture which they promptly rename "mobile society". Where there seems to be no continuity or connectivity, SBC deftly inserts its wireless technology to supply the image of new forms of connectivity. The difficulty of course is that in a mobile society unending movement makes the matter of social connection a problem. Rather than condemn the automated circuits of movement that swirl about in a murky sea of abstraction, SBC hails the social privatization, isolation, and

anonymity that are carried along in the paths of a mobile society—the secret lies in wireless technology.

Affective Speed

Representations like this of impersonal speed of city life are ambivalent images. While they can be framed as the heartbeat of a vast and efficiently rationalized economic system, or as symbolic equivalent of unrestricted movement within a market society, the same images also carry anomic overtones. Advertising uses representations in both ways. Usually the music functions to code the viewers affect and thus the reading of the advert. In either event, corporate practices, commodities and/or services make speed manageable. Advertising offers images of good speed and bad speed. Good speed is controlled speed or integrated speed. Bad speed is chaotic, debilitating or uncontrolled.

In the Information Economy "bad" speed occurs when the flow of information overwhelms the receiver and turns into Noise. A 1998 Invesco ad opens with a montage of distorted shot clips of the NY Stock Exchange characterized by a roller coaster ride— turbulent, indecipherable cacophony of speed. Shots whiz along in a video editing assault on the viewer's nervous system. Jumpy camera movements, disruptive transitions, random color shifts, and lens distortions, all are speeded up to frame the realtime perceptual disorder and dislocation of the stock exchange floor. The volume and intensity of data coming at us are like riding a bullet train. The music is discordant, grating and sounds as if someone were scraping finger nails over a blackboard. But then we pause in a white light and the screen asks, "How do you separate knowledge from noise?" Ans. "Call Invesco." The mood suddenly becomes relaxed and quiet; the corporation buffers the investor from the stress of the accelerated information flows.

Northern Light, a corporate search engine, uses the cinematic devices of montage and blurring to demonstrate the difference between a blizzard of data and the precision of knowledge. A lone individual enters a white walled isolation chamber. He pushes "enter" on the keyboard and a woman intones, "World Wide Web." Suddenly, accelerated information flows traverse the walls and the ceiling of the cubicle, surrounding him in a totality of humankind's recorded discoveries. The sound effects are again grating, discordant, disorderly and stormy. In the Information Society there is no escape from too much information too fast. The walls flicker with a myriad of informational forms: symbols from ancient peoples, mathematical formulae, computer program binary encodings, cells and skeletal forms, suggesting that all knowledge is immediately available. But how does one make sense of so much meaning when there are no spaces between the meaning, when all the semes of meaning blend into one massive seme? Northern Light organizes the info stream into manageable categories. As the music softens, icons appear on the wall: artificial intelligence, semantics, intelligent agents, psychology of learning.

Both of these ads use cinematic techniques to accelerate the flow of images, creating cognitive turbulence. Blurring, speeded up movements, distortions, and perceptually disruptive transitions blend together to create a synergistic explosiveness. Music functions to exaggerate visual stress before giving way to psychic relief.

These same techniques can also be used to create a human cohesion, a global community based a time space compression designed to serve the human condition. In the late 1980's many advertisers produced hyperactive ads for commodity goods. Brands such as Levi's and Nike were at the forefront of this genre of advertising. Heavily influenced by MTV, these commercials aimed at a young, hip, media savvy audience. In 1995 Wieden & Kennedy (also Nike's agency) produced a commercial for Microsoft that typified this drift in advertising towards accelerating the velocity at which visual information had to be decoded. This 60 second commercial is composed of 105 shots supported by a layered voice track which weaves in and out. Microsoft mixes global signifiers with images of its software in a hyperactive barrage. Subjected to more than three shots every two seconds, this machine gun pace is supported by disruptive camera, lighting, and editing techniques such as flickering light, overexposure, jump cuts, jerky pans, objects passing in front of the camera, obtuse camera angles, extreme close ups, use of a fish eye lens, mixing black and white with color, and decentered subjects (Goldman and Papson 1996). This accelerated hyperreal style is organized around cutting to discontinuity. Photographs of physical reality flicker with the new reality of the computer monitor, simulations. Texts are everywhere, often in fragmented, multi lingual multi genre forms.

This Microsoft commercial is premised on the use of fragmented and decontextualized images. The flow of visual particles mixes the European with the Asian, children and the elderly, black and white, home and office, the natural with the urban and the simulated. Brought together, they signify access and power in a global arena. Buried in this "image in a particle accelerator" approach is a content that expresses "Humanity in itself" powered Microsoft software. Microsoft celebrates the collapse of boundaries—physical reality and simulation, representation and reality, the social boundaries of age, ethnicity, gender, class and nationality.

Like a powerful force of nature, Microsoft has unleashed its power on the world and "the world will never be the same again." Video speed serves a purpose here, allowing a never before imagined practice of human differentiation

to unfold simultaneously everywhere across the cultures of the planet. Traditional boundaries and limits are abolished, enabling individuals to challenge the restrictive boundaries of conventional wisdom—to accept the imperative to be creative and transcendent— "make trouble." Anti authoritarian connotations mixed with those of personal creativity suggest the demise of old institutions that have historically determined and constricted people's lives.

Malcolm Waters' (1995) description of a global culture as a fragmented chaotic form parallels the montage structure of Microsoft's commercial. The hypercommodification of culture is overwhelmed by signs and simulations in which status is associated with style choices that are hyperdifferentiating at accelerating rates. Like the shopping mall, it is composed of decontextualized signs plundered from a variety of referent systems— nature, history, and exotic cultures. Like surfing the Internet, there are no coherent maps, no ultimate authority, just a cultural world in a permanent state of flux. This view of the global cultural economy is hyperanomic. There is no center. Sign hierarchies are in constant flux. While the form of the Microsoft commercial mimics this chaos, the content is given meaning by the voice over and the tagline, "Where do you want to go today?" to create a sense of unfolding freedom and opportunity for individuals located here, there and everywhere because of the power of Microsoft software.

This ad reveals a parallel to the political economy in which flows of capital prompt anomic formations—and even disarray and confusion while corporate public relations legitimize corporate practices as beneficial to humanity in general. Classical humanism modeled after "The Family of Man" exhibition is turned into a look, which positions the corporation as global, humane, and multicultural.

In a 2000 US West commercial communicative speed is equated with friendship networks and a rich exciting "packed" leisure. The ad starts with a nostalgic sense of the past: kids talking into two tin cans connected by a string, telephone lines cutting across a rural landscape, a young man stands by a fence. Suddenly a flock of birds fly by and the ad moves into "hyperdrive." The video breaks up, suggesting an ontological leap into the future. A row of satellite dishes realign setting off a montage of disparate images— Seattle at night, a skier kicking up powder, the painted desert, hay fields. These are mixed with friendship groups of multiracial children smiling and mugging for the camera. In one, an elderly female artist photographs and e mails her painting; a father touches the image of a child on a computer screen in wonder; even a deaf child receives a text message from a friend inviting her out to play. Here the speed of connectivity empowers human relationality. The speed of montage violates the boundaries of perception.

Deterritorialization & Mythologies of Speed

One mythological representation played out in some ads is the science fiction version of time space compression and deterritorialization in virtual reality. Here territorial space is figuratively abolished by the overcoming of time. Though this vision of a new unitary world space is predicated on the accelerated development of computerized communications technologies, there is only minimal visual reference to speed as such in these representations because, as we have pointed out, there is no need for the illusion of speed when all relations can be conducted in a unified time space coordinate. By annihilating space, time is presented as becoming synchronous and unified. Harbinger represents itself thusly in a darkly futuristic, neo Orwellian style.

The space that connects those who conduct market exchanges is a virtual space. We enter this dark space mediated by a Matrix like female oracle and spokesperson who appears as the face of Harbinger: "Welcome to a whole new world of e commerce— Harbinger.net. Created by the company thats helped 40,000 businesses and 85% of the Fortune 500 succeed in business to business e commerce." Her face emerges from darkness before being multiplied twenty six fold, defining the video landscape that commands this whole new world of virtual space. Old school landscapes disappear in this style of representation, and the markets of the world are converted into a giant wall of video monitors representing companies' sign presence—Dell, Deutsche Telecom, Genentech, BP, AT&T. As Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri (2000: 347) observe, deterritorialization "imposes a continuous and complete circulation of signs." The corporate signs symbolically replace the companies they stand for, so that business to business commerce can occur in this imaginary world that Harbinger.net represents as the virtual space that will outmode the spatially far flung and dispersed marketplaces composing global markets.

Though this is a hollowed out space, it is also depicted as a completely fluid space. Notice the ceaseless movement of symbols and people even though their movements seem to lack any apparent direction or agency unless we presume that their robotic patterns are programmed in pursuit of profit. Like other ads that cast themselves in cyberspace, the Harbinger ad ontologically and epistemologically redefines the world via an array of monitors— "welcome to a whole new world of e commerce." The monitors form the background, the new landscape, and speed

of movement is embedded in this layer in the form of mediated digital and video information. Meanwhile, in the foreground, humans perform their duties in a regulated and controlled fashion.

The monitors' prominent architectural presence suggests an encompassing capacity for a total global mediation and synthesis of reality; they form a necessary structural condition for an emergent world of 24/7 commerce. Where commerce is an uninterrupted stream, these screens do not simply evoke mediation, they become digitally constitutive—they have come to define the nature of reality itself, they form its skin.

The membrane of monitors lights up the space, while mediating the dispersed speech acts occurring in synchronous moments. This video membrane is a communications device that makes it possible to have an efficiently rationalized world market— decomposed and fragmented into an infinite array of fields that cannot be fully mastered until re mediated through the computerized video apparatus of Capital. Here we encounter not just a series of blue flickering simulations, but the one true simulacrum—the copy that precedes the original—for the assumption here is that this is reality, but with value added!

> Today abstraction is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it. It is nevertheless the map that precedes the territory—precession of simulacra—that engenders the territory . . . . (Baudrillard 1995: 1)

In a world shrouded in darkness, Harbinger appears as an intensely focused beacon of brightness. In this representation of casino capitalism, like Las Vegas, one can no longer tell day from night. Harbinger claims to abolish the impediments of time and space because of the restrictions these impose on the possibility of uninterruptible processes of circulation and exchange of capital, magically compressing the time space relationship into a virtual cyberspace where none of the laws of gravity seem to apply anymore. Hence, the most vivid, and the weirdest, image in the commercial is that of a floating man, who looks very much like an inflatable balloon in the Macy's Thanksgiving parade, drifting into position to consummate a handshake (now the universal signifier of a non coercive market exchange) in space with another floating hand. "Here customers and suppliers connect and trade on the net. Here business is conducted globally in real time." It is worth noting the contradiction in this imagery of weightlessness to represent the supersession of time and space. Weightlessness has been a correlate of deterritorialization and the annihilation of time. This particular imagery of floating man to represent freedom and possibility, however, transforms the representatives of capital more and more into puppet like entities, unable to control their own movements, but governed instead by the extraordinary magical powers of the new sorcerer (presented here in female form). What makes this version of time space compression possible? Harbinger is unequivocal in its answer. The ensuing image of giant telecommunications satellite dishes is shown precisely as the voiceover refers to the conduct of business to business exchange in real time.

While the monitors that form the skin of this universe display the circulation of corporate signs, all references to nations have been omitted. If deterritorialization refers to the elision of national boundaries and the authority of states to enforce territorial codes and laws, then Harbinger depicts itself as the sovereign of this new spatial universe. Cyberspace defined this way, as an absence of nations or territories, foretells the end of a Weberian sociology based on the "legitimate use of organized force within a given territory."

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000: 326 27) argue that Capital in its current historical stage can be understood as "deterritorializing and immanent" insofar as the governing mechanism shifts from fixed structures to the fluidity of "sets of equations and relationships that determines and combines variables and coefficients immediately and equally across various terrains without reference to prior and fixed definitions or terms." The premise here is the same as we have already recounted with respect to Capital's imperative toward speed as a means of reducing circulation time. Just as friction reduces profit margins, so too does fixity—whether it be the fixity of traditions or the fixity of place or the fixity of nation state boundary locations. How is this aspect of deterritorialization represented in the Harbinger ad? There is unceasing movement in the ad—the peripatetic movement of feet and legs across this dark space, along with the numeric shadows that wander across otherwise blank eyes and face. The nonstop flow of numerals represent the symbolization of the most perfect form of abstracted knowledge that permit relationships of general equivalence to be articulated and swept away so that the process can be repeated over and over again.

Once again, Jean Baudrillard was among the first to warn about how the representations of time and space were changing, and the possible political consequences of such changes. Writing over twenty years ago, Baudrillard observed that:

> The body, landscape, time all progressively disappear as scenes. And the same for public space: the theater of the social and

theater of politics are both reduced more and more to a large soft body with many heads. Advertising in its new...dimension invades everything, as public space (the street, monument, market, scene) disappears. It realizes, or, if one prefers, it materializes in all its obscenity; it monopolizes public life in its exhibition... It is our only architecture today: great screens on which are reflected atoms, particles, molecules in motion. Not a public scene or true public space but gigantic spaces of circulation, ventilation and ephemeral connections. (Jean Baudrillard 1983:129 130)

An element of postmodern theories has to do with the ways in which time and space become annihilated. Telecommunications and computer technologies have materially challenged traditional, and even modern, ways of experiencing time and space. Just as significantly, when joined to the mechanical reproduction of images, these technologies have challenged the ways we represent and conceive of time and space. If we only looked at the Harbinger advertisement, we might readily agree with Baudrillard about the disappearance of "body, landscape and time," but if we look across the many ads touting time space compression we might see this as hyperbole. Baudrillard's assessment seems particularly attuned to Harbinger's ad. By transforming landscapes into the architecture of screens, public space becomes reduced to darkness illuminated only by the power of Capital's eye, and Capital's eye shines only on the locus of the most lucrative transactions. Everything else drifts towards the shadows. Just as landscapes are displaced by the apparatus for mechanically reproducing photographs, so too the self motivated body is taken over by the technological capacity to digitize all relevant market information turns.

Deterritorialization and Abstraction — "No Sense of Place"

Throughout our exploration of how speed gets represented in corporate advertising, we have tacked back and forth between a series of related questions. We have talked about the matter of how speed gets represented. But we can break this down further. There is the question of the phenomenon that gets signified—speed and its relation to deterritorialization. But then there is also the matter of how it gets signified. On the one hand, the subject of speed is a content issue; on the other hand, the manner of its signification can be crudely thought of as a form issue. The very form of advertising, we shall argue, contributes to the experience of speed and deterritorialization.

The very medium of television advertising is structurally constituted towards deterritorialization, no matter what the subject is because television advertising is predicated on abstraction. This decontextualization process always—and necessarily— involves lifting meaningful action out of its time space coordinates. These coordinates may be reestablished or recontextualized through the framing process, but given the premium on brevity in television advertising, the tendency is almost always towards condensation and abbreviation.

In Sign Wars, we argued that the same logic of capital that has played itself out with regard to material objects throughout prior historical stages of commodity production, now also applies to the production of images. The rule can be stated quite simply—there is a tendency toward the accelerated circulation of commodities in order to offset the tendency toward a declining rate of profit. When the commodities in question are already abstracted images— signs—the tendency towards deterritorialization becomes compounded because the duration of images diminishes while the velocity of turnover increases. Not just in a single advertising campaign but across the whole of advertising then, there is a tendency toward a worldview of a world without moorings—a world in which decontextualized signifiers sometimes float, sometimes rocket about. This is one meaning of deterritorialization to us.

In a rudimentary way, the historical processes of deterritorialization have been rooted in historical evolution of commodity abstraction. As Marx pointed out, the money form permitted all forms of value to be converted into their general equivalent. Money of course was the universal currency that facilitated this process. When land became a commodity that could be bought and sold, the process of deterritorialization was already well under way. When the forms of value tied to that land—e.g., iron ore, coal, trees— could be extracted and shipped elsewhere in exchange for currency, these too were steps along a path of deterritorialization.

As commodities are made ever more sophisticated to create new possibilities for profit, markets elaborate ever more abstract forms of the commodity. The first of these were commodity futures which calculated the difference between the present and future values of a particular commodity. In recent decades financial capital has spawned all sorts of new commodity derivatives to hedge risk and create more potential planes or surfaces on which to seek profits. The result, as Pryke and Allen (2000) have argued is that derivatives function effectively as new money forms that not only accelerate time space compression but monetize time space relations as well.

Montage and Deterritorialization

An impression of deterritorialization is conveyed routinely via the montage approach —so routinely that most of us are apt to stop noticing. The montage is one of the most frequently used signification strategies in corporate

advertising. Viewers may be familiar with this style of ideologically depicting deterritorialization in ads such as those for GE, Siemens, and Boeing. When used in corporate ads, the montage series glance across and over the cultural and natural geographies of the planet, the speed of the editing and the music dictating our experience of speed through the world system.

The montage permits corporate ads to tie together a collection of geo culturally marked spaces that evoke memories of territory. The motive force connecting these markers is the corporate entity/identity itself defined as a meta agent. Using a fast paced video editing style in conjunction with musical orchestration, the advertiser seeks to reintegrate the disconnected and floating markers of territorial space under the aegis of the corporate sign. In ads such as these it is difficult at times to distinguish between trans territorializing and deterritorializing. Though cultural stereotypes remain as markers of place in this global system, once again the boundary locations of nations vanish. But unlike, the Harbinger ad where Baudrillard's prophecy appears to be realized, the montage rarely permits viewers to lose sight of either landscapes or bodies. Though both landscape and the body are hollowed out and turned into second order signifiers, it is clear that this representation of deterritorialization is based less on the disappearance of landscapes than on their reverberating echoes and traces— mostly visible now in the floating signifiers of language, garb and gesture.

Indeed, the montage approach signifies speed in part by how rapidly the sequences of photographically abstracted and isolated landscapes fly past. Because these ads aim to signify the global reach of the corporation by flattening the world into a linear sequence of landscapes as well as signifying how the speed of technology has allowed these firms to make distance a non issue—"No matter where you are anywhere in the world, you"re never very far from a Siemens product"—the landscape remains a necessary element in the signification process. So too, the importance of the human body and its capacity for expressive gesture is crucial counterweight to speed as a means of legitimating the firm as a force committed to sustaining communal life.

In ads such as that for Siemens, these quick shots of marked spaces help create what we might call "grounded montage." Siemens uses a recurring image of a man leading a camel across a desert dune. But this desert is not about place, it is instead symbolic of the reach of the corporation. Siemens sutures together images like the desert scene to construct a montage of a unified and coherent world —a world made coherent by the necessity of Siemens' technologies. Siemens also naturalizes this deterritorialized space with a reassuring male voiceover that states: "No matter where you are anywhere in the world, you"re never very far from a Siemens product." It turns out that the overcoming of spatial distance is a function of the civilization process.

General Electric has long been recognized for its stylized corporate montages complete with signature songs and signature slogans—"We bring good things to life." Cheerleaders for global capitalism, GE ads are often considered sappy and celebratory representations of an empire of peace and prosperity unified by the connective tissue of GE's technologies. Listen to and read the lyrics to the GE song and think about them as they seek to reframe the dissociative video logic of deterritorialization back into a warm sense of place.

Visually the ad exudes speed of movement, but many of its scenes latch on to images of warm, affective human relations. The ad taps into an ethos of universal humanism as it relocates "place" in the deepest human longings to touch and hold our children, to love and be loved. With the recurring refrain of "what are we doin" here" the ad repeatedly uses "here" to identify place as the locus of meaningful human action. Using the device of blurring and rapid cutting, the ad swings from the particular to the global and back again so seamlessly that we might scarcely notice the fragmentation of space and time. "What are we doin" here" emerges as a device for articulating general equivalence. Just as the money form once provided the means for constructing conditions of general equivalence, GE uses the advertising form to construct a universal currency out of images abstracted from time and space.

Speed of Representation

Our exploration of the Representations of Speed in the discourses of corporate capital cannot be separated from questions regarding the Speed of Representation. Critics have suggested that "fast capitalism's" slice and dice strategies for appropriating bits and pieces of cultural value degrade public discourse (Agger 1989). Representational speed is not simply a product of pictures of speed, but of the very process of turning culture into commodity signs. As Capital grows ever more competitive in trying to extract additional sign exchange value for commodities, the circuitry of signification speeds up. Does the accelerated velocity at which semiotic particles pass through the circuits of capital "whittle down" the capacity for critical reflection?

Just as each particle follows its own trajectory, each fragment shines for a moment in the heavens of simulation, then disappears into the void along a crooked path that only rarely appears to intersect with other such paths. This is the pattern of the fractal—and hence the current pattern of our culture (Baudrillard 1993: 6).

Speed is both a means of countering the tendency for the rate of profit to fall and a chief culprit in accelerating that process. The culture industry spreads this tendency from the economy to culture by trying to force culture into the service of commodities. The obsessive quest for value undermines the very condition of valuation, yet further contributes to the speed of abstraction and decontextualization which is a necessity in a political economy of sign value. But as free floating, weightless signifiers proliferate and whiz about in search of meaning, it becomes ever more difficult to engage in a discourse of critical reflection.

The representational structure that best fits the slice and dice signification strategies of fast capitalism is the montage. Predicated on a relentless flow and movement of images past the viewer, the montage reduces the possibility of reflective critique despite the gross distortions that are inherent in its use as a signification practice. Unless one is willing to remove the montage from the flow of television, slow it down, pause it, freeze frames, and separate sound and narration from image, the capacity for critique is dulled by the twin forces of representational velocity and decontextualized referent systems. As each text goes speeding past, what remains is the blurred ideological framework of global capital. The "blur" turns out to be the perfect signifier for the current moment of hegemony for global capital.

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Timescapes of the Network Society

Robert Hassan

Since the late '70s, the mutually reinforcing interaction between neoliberal economics and the revolution in information and communication technologies (ICTs) has transformed the world in many ways. "Globalization" is what we have come to call this process, and many aspects of its profound effect have been analyzed from a range of perspectives (e.g. Appadurai 1990; Robertson 1993; Omahe 1993; Waters 1995; Bauman 1998; Steger 2003). This paper discusses a central element of this change through globalization that has so far received relatively little attention—our relationship with time and how this is changing, in turn, the nature of power and politics. More particularly, it looks at these changing dynamics of time, power and politics through the nexus between neoliberalism and the ICT revolution and the emergent network society that this process has created.

Time in Theory

Until recently, the study of time in the social sciences and social theory has suffered a more generalized neglect; it has tended to occupy a peripheral role as a method through which modernity was understood. In other words modernity has not been analyzed systematically from what Barbara Adam calls a "temporalized perspective" (2003). Marx, for example, did not articulate an explicit theory of time and wrote only sporadically about the role of the clock in the commodification of labour (see Lukacs, 1990: 89-91). In the 20th century Lewis Mumford did in fact see the clock as "central to the Industrial Revolution" but this was in the context of a discussion on the general role of technology and technical systems, not temporality per se (1934/1967:14). Social historians such as E.P. Thomson (1967/1993:352-403) likewise attributed a good deal of importance to the clock as a transformative technology in the context of an unfolding modernity. However, it is viewed principally as a rationalizing technique of worker "time discipline" and not as a way to understand what this temporal domination may mean for the diversity of human time reckoning prior to their colonization by the industrial logic of the clock.

Paul Virilio, in his more speculative social theory of temporality, concentrates on the (very real) effects of speed and velocity in politics and in social life (Virilio 1986; 2000). Others have grappled with how our time-space horizons are being drastically curtailed in the era of "flexible accumulation." David Harvey, for example, in his Condition of Postmodernity (1989) sensed that our relationship with time and space were undergoing profound change due to the revolutions of neoliberalism and ICTs. He called this "time-space compression" and, tantalizingly, writes that it will "revolutionize the objective qualities of space and time [so] that we are forced to alter…how we represent ourselves to the world" (1989: 240). Unfortunately, however, Harvey fails to do full justice to this claim and concentrates his theoretical explorations much more upon the spatial dimension at the expense of the temporal. The "rapidity of time," as he terms it, makes it difficult to "react to events" (1989:305-6), but the analysis does not proceed much beyond this fairly obvious conclusion, and discussion on ways to locate in theory and harness in practice the "objective quality" of postmodern time is not attempted. In fairness, Harvey was writing in the opening phases of the transition from Fordism to network-based flexible accumulation, and his undoubted prescience should not be expected to achieve total perspicacity.

The changing temporal organization of everyday life within the postmodern network society is the key issue

this article seeks to examine. To explore this question more fully, some central questions need to be considered. These are: how do we experience time? What is the nature of time in the network society? How does it contrast and compare with our relationship with clock time, an abstract and empty social construction that has dominated our relationship with time since the industrial revolution? And, finally, what does what I term "network time" portend for what Barbara Adam (1998) terms "timescapes"—times that interpenetrate and permeate our lives but have been displaced, marginalized and sublimated by industrial clock time? Let us begin with some grounding perspectives on time from recent social theory.

Timescapes in Social Life

How do we experience time? Today from most people the question would elicit a negative answer. We are "pressed" for it; our time is "squeezed" to the point where we have little left to ourselves, and so forth. Beyond this generalized frustration with "it," most of us delve no further into its nature—just like the ever more complex realms of modern life, we feel there's simply "no time" to go into such matters. However, a diversity of time(s) or temporalities are immanent in both humans and nature. Potentially, we can experience and live in an interconnecting multiplicity of times that can combine in an endlessly complex but ultimately unified temporal whole. As I said, Adam has called these temporal dimensions "timescapes." But what are these timescapes? Unfortunately, modern English is a limited tool with which to describe, accurately, these immanent temporalities that we barely understand and so much more work needs to be done to overcome this. Perhaps an easily comprehended way to think about timescapes is to think of an array of temporal features—flowing durational "scapes"—that exist in lived reality, in us, in our cultures and in nature. Each feature, or temporal scape is implicated in all the others but not necessarily of equal importance. Context is the "now" or the "present." It is the intersecting point of contact between the different timescapes that touch our lives—or those timescapes that we ourselves bring to a context or situation to generate a uniquely experienced timescape. As Christopher Prendergast puts it: "What we call 'the present' is a dynamic cluster of temporal traces, of the past it has been and the future it is in the process of becoming" (2003:99). What we create and experience in "the present" is, in effect, a timescape that is part of a socially constituted temporal whole, part of what is to be alive in a becoming and emergent social world.

Adam (2004) has succeeded in stretching the capacity of the language towards a useful taxonomy of the timescapes in humans and in nature. She argues that timescapes comprise such things as "tempo," which is speed, pace, intensity; "timing," which is synchronization; "time point" which is moment, now, instant, juncture; "time patterns" which is rythmicity, periodicity, cylicality; and "time extensions" which are duration, length, continuity. These temporalities are context- and culture-generated and are subject to constant change through the diversity of human circumstances.

For the peoples and cultures of pre-modernity, the diversity of temporalities were lived and experienced more directly, through less forms of mediation. Like breathing, they were explicit elements of life. People experienced them more proximately because they were creating their own living timescapes just as much as they produced their own forms of space, or landscapes (Lefebvre 1991; Gosden 1994). It was noted that timescapes are profoundly social and cultural. They are also dialectical, emerging as practices through our interaction with each other and with the natural and built environments. As archeologist Christopher Gosden (1994: 34-5) put it:

> People create time and space through their actions. Time and space, in turn, become part of the structure of habitual action, shaping the nature of reference between actions.

These took as many forms as there were social and cultural contexts to generate them, across the millennia and across the world. Timescapes could be cyclical, involving seasons, or rebirth; they could comprise linear conceptions of past, present and future; they could be cosmic, taking time patterns from the heavens; they could be "static" in that, through myth and ritual, cultures would seek to "arrest time" (Adam 2004). Or they could indicate an absence of time coupled, paradoxically, with its profound immanence, as found in elements of Zen Buddhism. For example, as American poet Robert Haas (1994: xi) has argued, the aim of the poetry of 17th century haiku master Matsuo Basho was to express that: "every moment is eternal; or, every moment of time is all time; therefore time doesn't exist." Moreover, these timescapes do not exist in isolation from each other—they "interpenetrate and permeate" the

lives of their creators and experiencers (Adam 1995:12) in the ongoing evolution of culture- and context-generated timescapes. In pre-modernity these dynamics gave a diverse temporal dimension to whole ways of life, to ways of thinking (knowledge production), and how we express this through language and writing; and these, in their turn, also reflected the immanent temporalities through the communication of changes in tense and so on. In short, they provided the means to orient the individual and group temporally in the world and to give meaning to their place within it.

Potential Time and Power Time

I said previously that we "potentially" are able to experience these immanent timescapes, and create an infinite diversity of others through culture and context. It is my contention that we still only vaguely intuit the timescapes of nature, of culture, of context and of our own biology, because they have been sublimated, displaced and dominated, to an ever-increasing degree—since at least the end of the Middle Ages—by industrialized clock time. From our contemporary perspective, it is difficult to appreciate the extraordinary effect that clock time has had upon modern and modernizing societies. And it is difficult to remember, so deeply has its logic impregnated cultures and societies, that it is not "time" at all but a social construction given the seal of scientific truth and validity through the revolution in Newtonian physics. According to this mathematical perspective, time exists not in nature and humans, but that these exist in time. Newton put the case famously in his 1687 Principia when he wrote that: "Absolute true and mathematical time, of itself, and from its own nature, flows equably without relation to anything external." He regarded moments of absolute time as moments that follow a continuous linear sequence. The rate at which these moments succeeded one another is independent of the universe and its processes (Whitrow 1972:128-9). The most powerful legacy of Newton's work was that it gave an abstract, mathematical and mechanistic foundation to perceptions of how the natural world and its place in the universe are constituted. Indeed, in keeping with the emerging thought of Enlightenment philosophy that advocated rational science and technological development as evidence of human progress, the machine, and in particular the clock, became a metaphor for the world and its logical, harmonious ordering. Clock time, then, from the perspective of modern social theory, reveals itself as a social creation, a figment of Enlightenment philosophy purporting to represent scientific actuality. Like the ill-fated Jacobin ten-day week that was legislated for during the early phase of the French Revolution, the clock is an abstract symbol for time; it is rationality pushed to an extreme, and an attempt at a machinic (clockwork) metering of the unruly and diverse timescapes that exist in humans and in nature.

However, clock time doesn't feel extreme, so inured to it have we become; so deeply has it infused our cultures and societies. This is because clock time, the revolutions in science and technology, and the capitalist system of production were mutually dependent factors in the industrialization process and the creation of modernity. These formidable logics came together in their most world-changing form through what Marx called "commodity production" and were expressed most succinctly in Benjamin Franklin's lapidary phrase "time is money" (Hassan 2003). The meter of the clock as scheduler and organizer of everyday life struck deeper and deeper into the world's cultures and societies as capitalism spread and suffused modernity in its wake. As the power of the clock grew, so too did the displacement, colonization and sublimation of the ever-changing, ever-fluid timescapes of millennia. The generation of potential time into actually lived timescapes through culture and context were increasingly thwarted by the power time of capitalist industrialism. Time metamorphosed in human experience from the local and the diverse, to the universal scope, the unerring meter and the undifferentiated context. This transformation was necessary to the world-historical mission of "commodity production" and the global rule of capital. As Éric Alliez put it: "only abstract time can ensure an effective function of capitalization" (1996:154). The time of the clock (relatively quickly) became what we perceived as time and experienced as time and what governed temporal life. In other words, a mechanized device that was imbued with transcendental significance, replaced the human and natural timescapes that has evolved over thousands of years. As clock time sublimated the timescapes of culture and context, it began to reshape modes of thoughts, ways of seeing and ways of perceiving the world. "Other" times became gradually relegated to the status of things we vaguely and inexplicably intuit. We see this meagerness of temporal perception in modernity through what Michael Flaherty calls "folk theory" or culturally bound ways of understanding the interpenetration of differing timescapes. For example, how is it, we have asked ourselves for millennia, that time seems to pass quickly when enjoying oneself, and "drags" when bored? Or does it? Flaherty shows how the logic

of "folk theory" can easily be reversed in "highly eventful circumstances" such as in combat or in a traffic accident, where split-second events seem to last forever, the "my whole life flashed before my eyes" scenario that many people experience (1999: 21-22).

Over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the rhythm of the clock has become so much part culture and society that we could hardly describe it in separation from other modes of life. It buries our relationship with these "other" times and frustrates a deeper understanding of them. The abstraction, to paraphrase Jürgen Habermas (1987:336), had become real.

Nonetheless, domination by the régime of clock time does not indicate that the times of pre-modern societies have to be seen as analytically and anthropologically distinct from those of modern ones. In both epochs the relationship with time are marked by complexity and potentiality. The critical difference is that in modern societies, as I have argued, a growing complexity of temporalities has become problematic and that time potentiality has been sublimated. As Alliez puts it "potential time" has been colonized (or as he more strongly puts it) "conquered," by "power time" (1996: xv). The process of colonization, however, does not mean that these timescapes have been nullified and voided by industrial power time. In society their presence is being constantly felt.

We can see this on the structural level, where the unerring meter of clock time that is necessary for the functioning of capitalism (and the clock time metering of cultures and societies to facilitate this) continually clashes with the timescapes of both humans and nature—often to catastrophic effect. The logic of capital and the clock constantly seek to synchronize the fluid and emerging temporal worlds of humanity and nature to its own measure—that of control, commodity and rationality. Harmeet Sawhney put the argument succinctly when he wrote, "[the] bygone world was a world of rhythms. Today, we live in a world of [attempted] synchronization" (2004:360). The differing timescapes in biology, in chemistry, in all organic life and in the environment, conflict with a rigidly clock-entimed capitalism. The result is a "dischrony" that underscores what Ulrich Beck terms the "risk society" (1992). For example, we saw the effects of dischrony and risk recently and horribly in the slow-paced eruption of the bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) disease in Britain in the 1990s (Adam, 1999). Here, the unchanging temporal imperatives of industrial agribusiness (acceleration, commodification, optimization) clashed with those of human and animal biology, rendering, so to speak, BSE an "invisible" risk that came to light only when the damage forced its way onto the scientific gaze and (later) a horrified public consciousness. A major consequence of this dischrony is that an increasingly complex industrial society is quite literally laying "time bombs" that will "explode" in times that are governed by the precise nature of the timescapes involved in the process. We can continue this literalism to furnish other illustrations. For example, the laying of landmines brings the open ended, complex and fluid timescapes of war (politics, ideology, weather, tactics, etc) into dischrony with industrially-entimed munitions production. The result, inevitably, is that war will end at some unknown point in the future, a point which the bomb makers must over-compensate for, ensuring that people will continue to be at risk from death and dismemberment for long after the timescapes of the conflict has passed. A similar logic is in operation in the manufacture of weapons-grade plutonium-293 for nuclear bombs. The Cold War, which triggered this process, lasted about fifty years (it could have lasted five, or five-hundred). Plutonium-293, however, will remain radioactive and lethal for about twenty-four thousand years.

This clash of human, biological, chemical and environmental timescapes with that of industrialized clock time ensures an increasingly risk-prone society. As industrialized society becomes more complex, then so too will the risk factor continue to increase. This is inevitable unless the time of the clock and capitalism can harmonize (work in cooperation with, not to seek control over) the deeper timescapes in nature and in humans. The emergence and potential of what I've termed network time may be one alternative to this increasingly problematic dischrony.

Network Time

At first glance "network time" does not seem too promising a basis upon which to pin one's hopes for our rediscovery of the diversity of times and rhythms that comprise the sublimated timescapes of modernity. Network time sometimes acts as a supposed synonym for the much more widely used term "real time," and this is usually associated with the technical obsession with temporal acceleration. These terms are differentiated, because I argue that "real time" is a fundamental misnomer, and that an understanding of what "network time" is opens up many more temporal possibilities. So let us briefly concentrate on the inapplicability of "real time" to describe temporality

in the network society. Computer programmers and systems designers coined the term to describe operating systems that could respond at high-speed to the input of data. The computer technicians' online dictionary of Internet terms defines real time as something "occurring immediately"; and on a surface level at least, this is how most people would conceive of real-time. However, this generalized definition, stemming as it does from a technical perspective, sheds little light on the social, cultural and temporal implications that "occurring immediately" may signify. Michael Heim, in his The Metaphysics of Virtual Reality, gives a more intriguing definition. He writes that real-time is "Simultaneity in the occurrence and the registering of an event, sometimes called synchronous processing…" (1993: 157). This represents a significant shift from the technical definition. "Immediately" connotes a brief temporal lag (be it measured in minutes, seconds, or even nanoseconds), whereas "simultaneity" suggests "happening at the same time," a canceling-out of temporal duration between events. Simultaneity implies, then, a non-time, the shattering, or voiding, or "death" of time. A problem here is that social theorists and the media more generally, have taken the technician's term of indicating something that happens in digitally compressed clock time (fast, but still multi-durational, multi-patterned, etc.) and implicitly or explicitly take it to mean no time. For example, Castells, in his 1996 book The Information Age: The Rise of the Network Society argues that globalization and the information age are heralding the era of domination by real-time, or what he calls "timeless time." Real time, for Castells, is also a kind of "non-time" which means that as the network society becomes more encompassing of culture and society, "linear, measurable, predictable time is being shattered…in a movement of extraordinary historical significance" (p433). In his speculative social theory, Paul Virilio is even more explicit when he writes in that "the teletechnologies of real time…are killing 'present' time by isolating it from its here and now, in favour of a commutative elsewhere that no longer has anything to do with our "concrete presence" in the world…"(1997: 10).

If we think about the nature of time, however, we can readily appreciate that the concepts of "timeless time" or of the "killing" of time, make no sense at all. Ontologically it is an impossibility. We are temporal beings living in a temporal environment—whether inside or outside the network. Temporal durations, patternings, rythmicities, suffuse everything, from the rapid heartbeat of a fetus in the womb to the several years it takes the oyster to grow its pearl from a grain of sand. Like trying to imagine "time before time began," i.e., before the Big Bang fifteen billion years ago, we evolved anthropologically and culturally ill-equipped to think in such terms. We may more readily appreciate the absurdity of simultaneous real time if we think about our own involvement with the network society. Think of the Internet. Its technical capacities and our own human capabilities ensure that this is an inherently asynchronous space. Nothing occurs instantaneously, or in real time. There is an open-ended spectrum of temporalities within the network, measured from a picosecond (one trillionth of a second) upwards. For example, we can flash an email across the world in seconds or minutes, and then wait for an unknowable period for a reply. This could come in seconds, minutes, hours, days, or never. Networks can fail, they can slow down or speed up; we could be using state-of-the-art technology, or an old 486 PC and a dial-up modem. The multiform temporal dimensions that we are able to create, at least in potential, in the Internet, has led Lee and Liebenau to note, "…we can regard the experience of using the Internet as one of pseudo-instantaneous access" (2000: 51).

One of the most significant developments in the evolution of the network society is that through our use of ICT technologies in more and more realms of life, we are creating a digitally based, spatial and temporal ecology. Through the Internet, through mobile phones, through PDAs, email, digital video and through a rapidly increasing density of interconnectivity by new applications and devices that appear almost every month, we are continually creating a diversity of spaces and times. These are network spaces and network times, for ourselves and for others to share. Just like the landscapes and timescapes created by humans in pre-modernity in the construction of their own context-dependent cultures and societies, contemporary denizens of the network construct their own information-based ecology. Network time is a digitally compressed clock time, a "chronoscopic time," (see Hassan 2003) but it is a time that has exploded into a million different time fractions, as many time fractions as there are users with ICT applications, in the amorphous and constantly emerging network ecology. This is where the important break with the analogue meter of the clock occurs. Clock time has been made digital by computer technology and set loose in the creation of fluid networks of social interaction. In short, computing, the emergence of the network, and the actions of human agency have subverted the basis upon which the mechanical clock shaped and synchronized the modern world.

Technological developments promise to make this temporal transformation even more profound. For example, advances in nanocomputing, biocomputing and quantum computing techniques have challenged both the scale and the very basis upon which computing is predicated, and is set to make computing and the role of computers in life even

more ubiquitous. Not only ubiquitous, but literally part of culture, society and the physical body. Nanocomputing is the construction of computing at the nanoscale (nanometer is one billionth of a meter, or one hundred-thousandth the width of a human hair). Working at this level, scientists at Bell Labs in the US have already constructed a transistor that is 50,000 times smaller than the width of a human hair (Brumfeil 2001). Shrinking down silicon chips in scale has physical limitations, of course, but this is being tackled through research in biocomputing, where computers are able to function like living organisms at the molecular or chemical level, obviating the need for silicon-based technology altogether. And spanning both these developments is the research in quantum computing. Here the whole basis upon which digital computing is founded (the binary logic of ones and zeros, on and off) is being changed. Working at the quantum level, where the classical laws of physics don't hold, engineers have discovered that in a quantum computer, classical binary logic operates simultaneously at both one and zero, on and off—at a state they call a superposition— which constitutes a fundamental revolution in the basic nature of information processing. Through these kinds of advances, the cyborg dream of Nicholas Negroponte (1995) to blend "bits with atoms" i.e., the fusing of computers with humans, seems to be a fast-approaching reality. Indeed, in 2001, Negroponte's brainchild, the MIT Media Lab, with funding from the American National Science Foundation, set up the Center for Bits and Atoms with the explicit aim to "explore how the content of information relates to its physical representation, from atomic nuclei to global networks" (MIT News, 2001).

Let us pause to summarize thus far. It is clear that through the information technology revolution something exceptional has occurred to the foundations of our modern relationship with time. Through ubiquitous computing and ever more dense levels of interconnectivity, the network society has evolved. This is both extraordinary and unprecedented, as it constitutes the creation (at least in potential) of a network environment; a network ecology that contains its own digitally created spaces and times. The evolution of asynchronous network time has meant that for the first time since the beginning of the industrial revolution, humans are able to create and experience timescapes that are not synchronized to, or sublimated by, the logic of the clock. This process is set to become yet more profound through developments in advanced computing. Humans, as active agents in an amorphous and emergent network ecology, will potentially be able to create their own timescapes. These will not be based upon or dominated by the abstract logic of the mechanical clock, but will be an asynchronous temporality that is predicated upon the interaction of innate human timescapes coupled (literally, as the active research into Negropontean cyborg theory shows) with molecular level computing.

Millions of people across the world who are part of the network society are already creating their own spaces and their own times, in their work, leisure and in interaction with each other in everyday life. However, the timescapes of genuine diversity of the kind Adam has cogently written are still immanent within the network society, not actually existing as real practice. Potential time has yet to overcome the domination of capitalist power time. But as I will argue, the "power-geometry" of space and time are in a state of deep flux at present, and historic opportunities present themselves for a social and cultural revolution in the dimensions of space and time in the network ecology. In these final two sections I will lay out the scope of the problem as well as the range of opportunities that are available for humans to overcome the domination of the clock and to recover and create anew the experience of diversity of timescapes that are immanent in both us, and the environments with which we interact.

The Temporal Geometry of Power in the Network Society

As noted at the beginning of this essay, the network society evolves and grows directly out of the nexus between neoliberal capitalism and the revolution in information and communication technologies. Globalization is first and foremost and process of spatio-temporal power relations. It is, as Doreen Massey puts it, a relationship of power-geometry (1991; 1994; 1999). The term neatly captures how power works in a complex and interconnected global matrix. Power, she argues, is generated through the specific geometries of connections, of proximities, of relationship building, of networks of influence and so on. She writes that:

> Different social groups, and different individuals, are placed in very distinct ways in relation to these flows and interconnections. At the end of all the spectra are [...] the jet setters, the ones sending and receiving the faxes and the e-mail, holding the international conference calls, the ones distributing the films, controlling the news, organizing the investments and the international currency transactions. These are the groups who are really in a sense in charge of time-space compression, who can really use it and turn it to advantage, whose power and influence it very definitely increases (1991: 149).

Written in 1991, the power-geometries described here by Massey could (with the mention of email aside) have been set in a period as early as the 1960s, or earlier—long before the nexus of neoliberal globalization and the ICT revolution upset this somewhat schematic process radically. Today, the geometries of power in the network society are in deep flux, and accordingly, the historical sureties of power concentration are no longer so straightforward. The essences of neoliberalism such a economic deregulation, market rule and the unfettered application of ICTs have meant that the relationships of power that have underpinned not only capitalism, but much of modern culture and society, have been thrown up into the air. Time-space compression plus the creation of a network ecology through mass participation by hundreds of millions of users have dissipated these grid-like "Fordist" geometries that Massey describes, and they are up for grabs. In the network, power no longer congeals so persistently around its historical geometries. In the information order, as Scott Lash notes, "power is elsewhere" (2002:75).

Network time, or what others (e.g., Lee 1999) have called "polychronicity" already undermines (unintentionally, it must be added) the rigid power time of capitalism. For example, Failla and Bagnara (1992, cited in Lee and Liebenau 2001: 49) argue that the application of ICTs:

> ...generates work methods that cut across the "traditional" sequence of events, changing the durations customarily regarded as "appropriate" and reducing the need to ...resort to rigid timetables. The effect of these changes is to disrupt the traditional work rhythms. In this sense [ICTs] help to eliminate or diminish the importance of time frames generally accepted as appropriate for performing a given activity.

The authors see this in positive terms, causing decision-making and work rhythms to be more flexible, giving people more time (and more flexible time) as the rigid time-frames of Fordist capitalism are "disrupted." Other observers who argue not necessarily from the perspective of neoliberal capitalism also see this as a good thing; it's a win-win situation indeed, for employers, for employees and for the built environment, too (Florida, 2002). The network society that has evolved out of the nexus between neoliberal globalization and the ICT revolution, however, has ensured that no one "wins." Let us look briefly at the time practices of ordinary people in the network society, before looking at the larger, systemic picture. An empirical investigation into the time practices of people by Dale Southerton (2003) has shown a growing anxiety experienced by those who feel a "time squeeze." The disruption of Fordist time frames through neoliberal/ICT-induced flexibilization has left personal control over time, for most people, even more diminished. The blurring of work time and family/leisure time force people to rationalize their time allocating and time coordinating practices, causing them to feel constantly "rushed" or "harried" (Southerton, 2003). In her best-selling study The Time Bind (1997), Arlie Hochschild makes a similar case. Clearly, instead of a "win" situation, most people feel compelled to synchronize themselves (or constantly try) to the "polychronicity" of the network.

The revolutions of neoliberalism and ICTs have certainly made capitalism flexible, and have disrupted the old time-grids of Fordism, but at a cost that will probably be unsustainable over the long term. In other words, capitalism, through its revolutionary momentum, in a systemic dialectic, is digging its own grave—again. Massey, in the quote above, writes of those "groups who are really in a sense in charge of time-space compression." As I said before, however, these words could have been written in the 1960s, long before the rise of the network society, and long before the power of those "groups" became problematic. On the effects of neoliberal globalization, Anthony Giddens (1997: 4-5) has written that:

> We are at the beginning of a fundamental shakeout of world society, which comes from numerous sources... It comes from the impact of technology on global markets and also from the disappearance of the Soviet Union. We are at the beginning of this process and we don't really know as yet where it is going to lead us... If you could say that the West controlled the earlier phases of globalisation, the current phase is one that nobody controls. (emphasis added)

Certain individuals and groups benefit from this upset power-geometry. Some, of course, get to become extremely powerful. But no one is in control because the power geometry that rested upon the spatial and temporal grids of Fordist capitalism has been shattered by neoliberalism and the ICT revolution. Harvey's "rapidity of time" does indeed make it increasingly difficult to "react to events." Planning and consolidation of power count for less when "events" can hit like a tidal wave. Wild stock market fluctuations, the deregulation of industries, the diminution of regulatory government involvement in all aspects of the economy (let the market decide) has meant that individuals and groups leading a company one day can find themselves and their corporations in deep trouble the next (like the CEOs of Enron and WorldCom). The effect of the neoliberal globalization/ICT revolutions, then, does make

capitalism more flexible, it does disrupt the temporal grids of Fordism—but it also disrupts the power-geometry that was formed upon these. A flexible and informationized capitalism is, then, over the medium- to long-term, a much weaker and intrinsically risk-prone capitalism.

The New Times of Postmodernity?

Power time has been undermined, but potential timescapes of diversity have not filled the vacuum. Flux, risk and uncertainty are still the defining characteristics of the neoliberal network society. However, within this dis-order lie immense opportunities for individuals and groups seeking to achieve more autonomy and sovereignty in the spaces and times of the network. Democratic potential, like potential timescapes, is immanent in the network. Within the flux of the network, new power-geometry formations are possible, and dense levels of interconnectivity are the basis for this. Millions of people, what Hardt and Negri (2000) term the "multitude" as opposed to "the people"— as connected individuals or as part of groups—are already working against the alienating logic of the neoliberal globalization/ICT nexus. The most important development here is that they are using the network and its multiform ICT applications to achieve this. For instance, shadowing the growing scope and scale of the network society since at least the mid-1990s, has been its antithesis, the so-called "global civil society movement" (Graeber 2002; Klein 2002). This is a broad coalition that ranges from middle-class church groups, environmentalists of every class strata, trades unionists, well as ordinary people from all walks of life who feel the erosion of civil society to be retrogressive, unfair or simply "wrong" in some unspecified way. What unites these is a deep-seated antipathy to the logic of neoliberalism and the free market. What enables them to organize together is their shared recognition that the network society is here to stay, and that ICTs, not parliamentary politics or the ways of a now-corrupted civil society, can be the tools of change. They share the idea that if used democratically, used primarily for people and not profit, then new ideas, new knowledges, new ways of being and new ways of seeing can take hold and transform the neoliberalized and rationalized network society into a more fair and sustainable one.

Digital networks, by their very nature (dense interconnectivity), are the perfect platform for this. They have the potential for the construction of new power-geometries that are both democratic and inclusive. Douglas Kellner (2002) and others have dubbed it a "technopolitics" and it has emerged as an alternative to the sterile politics of neoliberalism and the alienating network society it has created. As Michael Hardt (2002: 117) has written on the contradictory stance that the global civil society movement has take vis-à-vis traditional party politics and their exclusive power-geometries:

> The traditional parties and centralized organizations have spokespeople who represent them and conduct their battles, but no one speaks for a network. How do you argue with a network? The movements organized within them do exert their power, but they do not proceed through oppositions. One of the basic characteristics of the network form is that no two nodes face each other in contradiction; rather, they are always triangulated by a third, and then a fourth, and then by an indefinite number of others in the web.

Hardt articulates nicely here the potential democratic power of the "web" over the "grid"; and through the web, the global civil society movement has emerged as a pointer to the ways in which the rule of neoliberalism and the currently rationalized network society may be challenged. In terms of these newly evolving power-geometries, people, through the network, derive their power from each other in a flexible and inclusive web of digital interaction. And as users of technologies within an open web, people and groups are able, potentially at least, to learn to become both "culturally competent" (Fiske, 1987) and technologically sophisticated. That is to say, they become skilled in the use of ICT applications and devices, and are able to situate their use within the larger cultural context in a way that is self-empowering instead of self-alienating (Hassan 2004). It is through such a relationship with ICTs that the basic elements of network autonomy and sovereignty may be built up and built upon. Through the actions of people as users, the network, as we have seen, generates its own time, network time. This network temporality, to be sure, is accelerated if taken as a networked whole. This is primarily because most people still do not exert real autonomy over their ICT use in the context of the network society. They have not yet managed (or have yet attempted) to connect a "cultural competence" with a "techno savvy." Most of us still feel time pressured and feel that the network society has contributed primarily to the "acceleration of just about everything," as Gleick (2000) put it.

Nonetheless, the truly revolutionary thing about the information technology revolution and the network society

it is rapidly constructing may be something social science has not yet given much thought to—the creation of a new form of time and a new relationship with temporality. When we speak of "revolution" it is also important to remember that we are not dealing with a cataclysmic break with what went before. As Karl Marx well understood, revolutions never are. He saw the past in terms of continuities in ideas, in traditions that carry forward and help shape the future. Marx, however, saw this in somewhat negative terms, as serving to blunt the revolutionary ardor of the workers, causing them to be timid and fearful of their true potential. Revolutionary socialism is not on the agenda today; but the overthrow of capitalism is not necessary to move to a new digital phase of increased democracy and social justice. The global civil society movement is only one example of what is possible when people, through a developing of continuities from past practices, are able to gain a measure of autonomy over ICTs within the information order. The radical essence of network time is that capitalism, and, therefore, society can become (and is already becoming) disconnected from the tyranny of the unerring meter of the clock and the temporal domination it has developed over the last two hundred years and more. Accordingly, through the self-conscious creation of different timescapes—to be intentionally "untimely," for example, as McKenzie Wark (2001) put it—means that people themselves, acting as part of a movement, or as individuals, can undermine the neoliberal order that shapes the network society today. They are therefore able to play a part to help shift capitalism onto another temporal and organizational plane, one where the democratic timescapes of communities, of production and consumption and of the diverse particularities of context and culture can transform capitalism into something more humanistic. Capitalism can therefore be a mode of production that is constitutive of a multiplicity of temporalities and of timescapes, ones that are more in synchrony with the needs and aspirations of users as autonomous agents within an open and fluid networked whole.

Éric Alliez, in the quotation I cited above, argued that capitalism couldn't exist without the abstract and totalitarian meter of clock time. The evolution of the network society has shown (in potential at least) that it can. Moreover, it can be a mode of production where—once freed of the temporal constrictions of neoliberalism and its fetish for instrumentalized speed and technological "efficiencies"—the dischrony and risk that it generates can become more harmonized, and the temporalities of power time and potential time less rigidly opposed to each other. In short it can be a temporally diverse and timescape-rich network society where hundreds of millions of culturally competent and technologically savvy users of ICTs can shape it into something(s) we haven't yet dreamed of.

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The Mobile Phone in Everyday Life

Hannah Rippin

This paper explores how ordinary people use their mobile phones [cell phones in the U.S. and Canada] to interact in everyday life. These people are virtual selves, but the impact of their mobiles is very real. Mobile phone technology, more than any other, has the ability to envelop its users in a sphere of perpetual contact and instant access, touching every aspect of their daily lives.

> The virtual self is connected to the world by information technologies that invade not only the home and office but the psyche. This can either trap or liberate people... By virtual self, I am referring to the person connected to the world and to others through electronic means such as the Internet, television and cell phones... [These] technologies get inside our heads, position our bodies and dictate our everyday lives. (Agger 2004:1)

In analysing the meaning and significance of mobile phone use in the everyday lives of users, three discrete yet interrelated questions arise:

- What role does the mobile play in the management of everyday life?
- How does the mobile affect the configuration of self?
- How does the mobile affect human interaction?

There is a paucity of micro-level research on users' own interpretations and reflections of how their everyday life is fashioned through interaction by mobile calls or text messages. Therefore, I undertook a phenomenological approach using diaries, focus groups and interviews to describe and clarify how the mobile is incorporated into daily life.

The empirical data of this study reveal several insights which have not been developed in the existing literature. I have identified new behaviours which have been analysed as six discrete, yet interrelated, themes.

The co-configuration of the technology and the user have led to the production of new needs in terms of use, and this has had a profound effect on the ways users present themselves to others and conduct their social networks. The mobile has changed human capacity in terms of memory and concentration, whilst also producing new forms of emotional experiences such as duplicity and anxiety.

Contextualization

Existing research relevant to the area of mobile communication can be divided into three distinct but interrelated themes: communication in the global age, communication at the micro-level and mobile phone communication.

Communication in the Global Age

Globalisation. The debate regarding the existence of globalisation has been settled, as politicians, economists and sociologists accept that the world has become financially and materially interdependent. Deliberations now focus on the form of globalisation, how it came to exist and where it will lead in the future. Two issues of relevance to this article are communication as the driving force of social change, and increasing dependence on mobility in the global age.

The role of communication in the formation and development of society has been addressed by many social theorists such as Habermas, Thompson, Giddens and Agger.

> Globalisation is political, technological and cultural as well as economic. It has been influenced above all by developments in systems of communication. (Giddens 1991:70)

The overall consensus is clear; communication is essential for society to function on both macro and micro levels of interaction, and developments in communication technology have played an integral part in the rise of modern societies. Giddens (1999a,b) believes that there is no single driving force behind globalisation, although instantaneous communication has had the most profound effects on society today. Giddens' work is supported by Habermas (1984, 1987) who asserts that communicative action stimulates, organises and facilitates social transformation. The process of understanding and agreeing with other social actors through rational discourse allows communal plans to develop and revolutionary processes to occur.

The current technological equivalent of Habermas' forum for rational discourse is the Internet, which may create an open forum for debate. However, Agger (2004) contends that although the Internet can bring people of different gender, age and culture together to communicate, it may not create the utopian ideal of global understanding. The self becomes the "virtual self"—connected to the world and others through electronic means, which potentially entraps or liberates.

Mobilisation. George Myerson (2001) highlights the significance of mobility in the global age by contending that "anything as massive as the mobile campaign most certainly deserves its own name…mobilisation" (Myerson 2001: 6-7). Myerson asserts that the new mobility of information and knowledge is not only dependent upon technological change, but more importantly, upon the cultural requirement of so many people to be mobile. "Mobilisation" signifies the importance of being free of wires, phone booths, bricks and walls. "The old phone is no more and so that old system of ideas has also passed away." (Myerson 2001:9). Mobile phone networks' marketing strategies attempt to convince consumers that mobile communication is synonymous with liberation, allowing the individual to choose how to spend time without restriction. The sheer scale of mobile use will soon equal or outstrip globalisation. The mobile allows us to communicate whatever we want, whenever we want to, with other people who possess telecommunication devices. This increases the number of people with whom we are able to communicate and the speed with which we can do it. "Network after network: you can virtually see the globe being encircled in a fine mesh of little connecting links." (Myerson 2001:15)

Communication at the Micro Level

Meaningful human communication depends primarily on language, both spoken and written. Research into human interaction using communication technologies such as text messages and phone calls could consequently deepen understanding of how social actors negotiate and manage their everyday lives in contemporary society.

Dramaturgical Role-play. According to Goffman (1959) human interaction has a dramaturgical character. Social actors play different roles in different scenes of their daily lives: father, son, brother, lover, friend, enemy, worker and consumer, all day and everyday. The management of these roles defines the interaction; failure to do so leads to the actors feeling discomfort and embarrassment. The self, in this manner, is not concretely defined, although experience and stereotypical expectations will define the role played by both actor and audience. The role played at any given time is their most important one and must remain the most convincing, so, unsurprisingly, conflicts arise when performers are divided over which role should take priority. Take for example a young man wanting to impress his companion on their first date at a restaurant. Faced with insolent service does he react as an outraged consumer, or a rational and patient man? Interaction, in Goffman's terms, relies on the interpretation of the scene and the mutual understanding of roles to be performed.

Individualisation. What to do? How to act? Who to be? These are focal questions for everyone living in circumstances of late modernity—and ones which, on some level or another, all of us answer, either discursively or through day-to-day social behaviour. (Giddens 1999)

The erosion of traditional structures on which to model oneself have changed somewhat since the publication of Goffman's work, as theorists now turn to individualisation to explain the changing nature of interaction,

both discursively and through day-to-day social behaviour. The changing definition of what is socially acceptable encourages the self to develop through experimentation (Bauman 1992: 2003). The self is no longer a rigid entity and all interactions are fluid, able to change direction to fulfil new subjectively defined objectives. Previous conventions which would have ridiculed and shamed individuals for being "different"—single parent, homosexual, black or disabled—are no longer valid. People are free to be who they want to be, when they want to be. Bauman suggests that experimentation allows the individual to present the formation of a new self. This freedom to choose applies to all aspects of everyday life—the self, relationships and careers—and centres around the individual alone. The liquid nature of modern living also discourages investment in a concrete future when the likelihood of having one is uncertain. This allows the self to experiment even more freely.

Experimentation and individualisation may lead to social and familial fragmentation (Beck 1992). As each individual is driven solely by their own needs, it becomes increasingly difficult and complicated to manage relationships. For example, a promotion may be good for an individual's career prospects, but potentially harmful to the family if it is required to relocate. The notion of individualisation indicated that the individual must then decide which is of more importance, self development or familial harmony. As the family group contains more than one member it is increasingly unlikely that everyone's goals will be exactly alike. In Beck's view, this tension and conflict between individual and collective goals may threaten, loosen or even break the bonds which unite the family group.

This quality of freedom, then, whilst liberating, also leads to uncertainty as constantly changing roles result in confusion about what constitutes the self. Individuals therefore yearn to find, join and bond with a group of other self-oriented individuals with similar interests; they look for a place where they can 'belong,' a 'neo-tribe.'

Performance Aids and Props. The erosion of traditional defined roles does not make Goffman's work invalid. His Presentation of Self in Everyday Life involves the use of props and tools in order to express the most appropriate projection of the desired self on the audience. Baudrillard (1988) elaborates this dialogue when discussing 'neotribalism'—modern fluid tribes who fulfil the desire to belong. Membership in such tribes is not founded on traditional categories of age, class, race and gender, as neo-tribes believe that such pigeonholing is insufficient in defining individual identity. However, individuals will adopt props in order to create self-identity in the neo-tribes where "the body is adorned only to be made into a spectacle" (Baudrillard 1988:18-19). Such props do not result in greater individualisation but paradoxically reinforce the sociality of the neo-tribe.

Individuals are free to define themselves through the clothes they wear, the activities they pursue and their bodily disposition (Featherstone 1991). The mobile is one tool which affords the "neo-tribes" of today mobility and freedom of choice, not only in the ability to communicate on the move, but to move more freely between 'neo-tribes' (Maffesoli 1991). Bauman (1992) postulates that the individual is increasingly detached from his membership in the social categories of class, gender, race and age, and free to choose the neo-tribe of which to become a member, although behaviour within that tribe will be prescribed. The individual is now enveloped in the tribal scene in a desperate search for community. The mobile may be both the artefact and agent which determines not only the membership, but also the normative behaviour within the chosen neo-tribe.

Agger would contend that developments in communication technology are a fundamental aspect of the fluidity of relationships. The self is not a static entity but can be redefined at will, reinventing itself daily. The self portrayed through mobile phone and Internet use may not necessarily be a true representation of the inner self. Goffman asserts that the same misrepresentations can occur in face-to-face interaction, but the use of technology enhances the ability for people to construct an ethereal self.

I agree that technology permits people to change their performances rapidly, call to call, chat-room to chat-room; however, I would contend that traditional relationships and roles do still exist. Although I support the notion that information and communication technologies like the mobile give people greater latitude in self-presentation, I do not believe that people are entirely blank canvases. The requirement to gain employment will require workers to conform to certain roles, and they can effectively discard this when their shift is over. Yet I think it is also important to note the increasing trend for employees to be held responsible for their behaviour out of work if it would bring the employer into disrepute.[1]

I contend that there is also a tension within this research. Paradoxically, a situation of mutual dependence arises from the need of virtual selves to belong, but the self-defined goals which drive individuals prevent the creation, existence and maintenance of the neo-tribe, as potential members put their own goals before those of the group.

The virtual self is connected to an entire world of others with equally transient roles and weak bonds.

> By virtual self, I am referring to the person connected to the world and to others through electronic means such as the Internet, television and cell phones… [These] technologies get inside our heads, position our bodies and dictate our everyday lives. (Agger 2004: 1)

Technology in Everyday Life.   The mobile is an example of consumer culture as material objects have taken on significant symbolic, cultural importance and distinct organisational potential in the Western world (Slater 1997). Therefore, the analysis of other technological items in consumer culture, such as the personal stereo, can provide a basis of comparison with my own work on mobiles (Lury 1996; Bull 2000).

The existing literature on the sociology of technology attempts to describe the constitution of the self and the corresponding social-psychological, physiological and emotional states. There are differing sociological views about the relationship between technology and society. Those espousing technological determinism[2] regard technology as autonomous and the agent of social change. Technology is seen as a force which shapes society, and problems arise when the increasing complexity and rate of technological change outpace the ability of social actors to adapt. Technological determinists would question how technology impacts society.

On the other hand, social determinism maintains that society changes technology (Mackenzie and Wajcman 1985). Politics, economics, culture and organisation are crucial to the invention, design, adoption and implementation of technology. The ways in which technologies are required and used by society are driven by market forces, and the adoption or rejection of technologies are shaped by social action. The design and production of the technology will be shaped by technologists, but the ultimate choice lies with the consuming agents of society. Technological artefacts, although introduced into society, are not forced upon it. Social determinists therefore consider it crucial to question and acknowledge the influence of social actors on the development of technology.

> We will take technological change as a given, as an independent factor, and think through our social actions as a range of (more or less) passive responses. If, alternatively, we focus on the effect of society on technology, then technology ceases to be an independent factor. Our technology becomes, like our economy or political system, an aspect of the way we live socially. (Mackenzie and Wajcman 1985:3)

For example, the design of the personal stereo enables the user to listen to their desired choice of music wherever they go. The actual implication of this creates an entirely new perception of the world for users; space, time and relationships are all forced to adjust due to the continual presence of music (Bull 2000). However, this is a process of co-determination as each individual will adopt and implement the technology personally, to her own specifications, needs and desires.

Latour postulates that the sociology of technology research should focus on networks of human-non-human interaction to examine how these networks are mutually structuring or co-determining. When discussing the development of commercial camera and film technology he describes:

> What we observe is a group of variable geometry entering into a relationship with an object of variable geometry. Both get transformed. We observe a process of translation—not one of reception, rejection, resistance, or acceptance. (Latour 1991:116)

Mobiles present an exciting opportunity to establish how technology developed for communication with others could have an increasingly prominent impact on the subjective configuration of the self. It could be contended that the mobile—a technological tool initially designed simply as means of communication—has had an impact beyond its function; it has become a fashion accessory, a prosthetic extension of and delineation of the self, a symbol of economic status and power.

In this study I argue that to analyse the nature of mobile use it is necessary to take account both of the particular properties of the mobile as a technology and of the way these properties are engaged with by particular categories of users; that is, I argue for the co-determination of the users and the technology.

The Co-Configuration of the User.   Specific properties of specific technologies will permit certain uses and encourage the development of new behaviours and rituals (Grint and Woolgar 1997). The mobile phone, for example, has a screen which displays numbers, callers, composed text, the latest Hollywood movie star or, more recently, pictures of friends or relatives. The inner technical circuits can store hundreds of numbers, save sent and received messages, organise and remind the user of when they should be at their next meeting or to buy a birthday card for their daughter. The increasing number and range of functions available on the mobile phone greatly exceed those of the

mono-functional telephone distributed by British Telecom in the 1950's and these are having profound effects on mobile phone users.

The multi-functional mobile phone has technical elements which can affect human behaviour, or, in Steve Woolgar's terms, configure the user. He discusses the interaction between objects and their users, and concludes that "the new machine becomes its relationship with its configured users."[3] Configuration occurs when the object impacts the way the user defines his or her identity, thereby setting constraints on their future actions. Co-configuration exists when the social actor simultaneously defines the use of a multi-functional object, thereby giving it a malleable sense of meaning. For example, the mobile phone of the 1980's would have been a very effective doorstop, had their owners decided not to use it to communicate with others. Likewise, today's mobile phone could act as a mere paperweight if owners decided that they wanted to use it this way. The technology impacts the user, but only to the extent that the user decides how to use the object.

The mobile phone is therefore polysemic—having a number of subtle meanings and uses induced by context. As polysemy refers to text with many meanings, the mobile has many potential uses. Empirically "use" can refer to the increasing multiplicity of functions that the mobile phone has been designed to have. For example, it can make and receive calls, and send and receive text messages. It can also function as an alarm clock, an organiser and phone directory. Conceptually, as the sociology of technology notes, all technologies have many potential practical uses which will be defined by the agency of the user. For example, an agent can interpret the "use" of a mobile phone in an almost indefinite number of ways. It can be a means of entertaining themselves, a way to form, maintain or break relationships or a tool of surveillance. The fundamental theme of recent sociology of technology is therefore that "use" is configured by the agent, who is simultaneously configured by the multi-functional object.

Mobile Communication

One of the most astonishing explosions in modern consumer culture is undoubtedly the mobile. Statistics establish that over 76% of the UK own a mobile, and 66% of 15-24 year olds say they can't live without them.[4]

Mobile phone research to date consists of both quantitative and qualitative data. A number of commissioned reports have been published, which tend to employ immense international resources and use a combination of methodologies. The most comprehensive and up-to-date quantitative example was a survey of 4,000 British mobile phone users aged 15 and over. The report was commissioned and published by Vodafone in January 2003.

A breakdown of the British mobile phone population is compared to the composition of the general British population. Age, income and gender of the mobile phone population mirror that of the population as a whole, discarding thoughts of a stereotypical user. However, the work fails to identify how mobile phone users interact with their phone, which again strengthens the argument for qualitative research.

The results also illustrate interesting comparisons between mobile phone use (76%) and Internet use (45%), the composition of the mobile population and the way in which phones are used, including personalisation and text messaging. However, although rich in statistical information, the report lacks any depth and insight into why the phones are being adopted and adapted in these ways, as the report was designed to analyse mobile behaviour in a quantifiable way. Moreover, statistical data can be confusing. For example, there are discrepancies between Vodafone's and Orange's surveys. This highlights that all survey results will depend on what and who you ask and how. The surveys underline the phenomenally rapid expansion of the mobile networks, but ultimately fail to enrich an understanding of the motives and meanings attached by individuals to their mobile phone behaviour.

Nevertheless, there is literature which adopts a qualitative approach to mobile communication. Several studies have indicated a growing culture of dependency on mobile phone technology (Plant 2000; Roos 2001). Plant (2000) undertook a study of international phone use with interesting examples of mobile phone behaviour all around the globe—from "dummy" phones in Peshawar to signify status, to a Somali trader answering to the ring tone 'jingle bells' under a palm tree in order to conduct business and earn a livelihood. Plant even highlighted the troubling social effect on Japanese children whose constant use of mobiles made it difficult to interact on a face-to-face basis. One student said that young mobile phone users are becoming:

> ...less capable of direct, social communications. They rely on technology to converse. They are often intelligent with collecting information but not with utilising it, and I am often surprised by their awkward emotional responses. (Plant 2000: 57)

The problem is even more pronounced in China, where the one-child policy encourages the use of media technologies

to replace the loss of the extended family. The growing dependency on mobiles substantiates the contention that technology not only has an impact on the configuration of the self, but also the corresponding social-psychological, physiological and emotional states of the user. Michael Hulme stated that:

> There has been growing evidence of an increased dependency on mobiles—not just in practical terms, but in an emotional sense. (Michael Hulme cited in "Downtime" by Mark Lewis in Computer Weekly, May 20, 2003 www.computerweekly.com Accessed October 1st 2004)

This "need" and "dependence" on mobiles was further qualified in Hulme's work on the UK (2001) which concluded that 72% of users are obsessed with their mobile and 86% of users feeling anxious without it ; 46% of respondents aged 25-34 even liken the loss of their mobile to a bereavement.[5] This reliance on mobiles may have an economic as well as emotional component: communication must be efficient, goal-oriented and useful.[6]

Literature such as this causes me to question how completely technological means of communication are being incorporated into daily life, and encourages me to investigate the forces and motives which underlie the behaviour of mobile users.

Although networks' marketing campaigns emphasise the ability of mobiles to bring people together, others contend that dependency on the phone ironically increases feelings of alienation. The mobile can intensify feelings of loneliness and unhappiness. Surrounded by people who are constantly in touch with others through mobile phone conversations, some users feel that no one is thinking of them when no calls or text messages are received. Being permanently accessible heightens users' awareness of when they are not being contacted, consequently making them feel permanently unwanted (Plant 2000).

These findings refute the conclusions drawn by Kate Fox in 2001. Fox reported that the mobile would liberate users from "an alienating and fragmented" community.[7] Comparing the mobile to the new "garden fence," she asserted that people are now free to gossip and participate in the social grooming required to bring a sense of community to today's fast-paced city life.

Howard Rheingold also discusses the mobile phone phenomenon and, in Marxist fashion, envisions it as a tool of the "next social revolution" by reference to the ousting of President Estrada from leadership by mobile-phone-toting Filipinos in January 2001. "Smart mobs consist of people who are able to act in concert even if they don't know each other" (2002: xii). Rheingold, who coined the term "virtual community," "investigates" (exactly how is not clear) the role of the mobile in the transformation of culture and community. This new behaviour exemplifies the co-configuration of mobile phone use.

A well-documented area of sociological enquiry now revolves around the transformation of time and space through mobile phone use. [8] The existence of mobile phone technology has led to mobile owners being able to make contact and be contacted every minute of the day, wherever they may be, whatever they are doing. This can be liberating, but such mobilisation is also blamed for the loss of control over oneself as unwanted calls and texts are able to invade all time: work, leisure and rest. This results in a paradoxical situation where one feels liberated, but also more available to others, and hence more liable to be controlled.

Mobiles, however, not only invade the space of the two agents involved in the technological interaction. There has been a reconfiguration of the boundary between public and private space. Those in the vicinity of either agent are hostage to the raised voices discussing topics of no interest to them. The alerts of incoming calls or texts cause irritation to many (Monk et al 2004), so much so that bars, restaurants and transports now boast specific services for people who are tired of mobiles interrupting their personal space. Where mobiles are prohibited, individuals believe they can reclaim their own sense of space and not feel inferior to the person on the other end of their neighbour's mobile phone. Resembling passive smoking, constant chatter is polluting public space.

The invention of the camera phone has further complicated the public/private debate as pictures can be taken relatively discreetly and distributed to a wider audience without permission.[9] However, extensive literature exists on the public/private nature of mobile phone use and this will consequently be limited in my discussion.

The research conducted is therefore set in the context of existing work on communication technology. This study acknowledges the wealth of data that focus on the quantitative use and uptake of mobile phone technology, but notes that existing accounts fail to explain adequately the role or use of mobiles in the everyday experience of users. I overcame this weakness by undertaking a detailed phenomenological study in order to ascertain the subjective experience of the role of mobiles in the participants' everyday life.

Method

The focus of this research is the subjective responses of individuals to their mobiles. Several authors commend this approach. Appadurai (1986) notes that material artefacts, such as mobiles, can open themselves up to many forms of investigation in pursuit of an understanding of their social meaning and identity, but previous research on technology and culture has favoured adopting an ethnographic approach. Tia DeNora (2000) used the sociology of technology to investigate music as a constitutive feature of human agency, through the use of phenomenological ethnography and in-depth interviews. DeNora emphasises the importance of the use of ethnography wherever subjective responses are a prerequisite to conclusions drawn.

> There is no shortcut to this issue; only ethnographic research will do, and only ethnographic research has the power to elaborate our conceptualisation of what such processes entail...(DeNora 2000:38)

Bull (2000) studied personal stereo use and undertook a phenomenological ethnography which "follows users as they struggle to maintain their corporeal integrity of self through the technological organisation of space and place."[10]

> Phenomenology is a method that permits an adequate understanding of the users' habitual daily activities as it is attentive to the way in which social meanings are bedded down in individual forms of experience...Phenomenological method lends itself to an investigation of the structure of technologically mediated forms of everyday experience by permitting the dual study of the structure of experience together with the sedimented meanings underlying the daily experience of subjects. (Bull 2000:10)

Relying upon observations of personal stereo use and discussions with their users, Bull is able to build a vivid picture of how the personal stereo is incorporated into the daily lives of users in the city.

> By attending closely to how users describe their activity, it is possible to develop a structural framework that incorporates notions of space, place, time, cognition, (looking, listening, thinking, remembering) and the interpersonal within a critical framework encompassing the concepts of control, management, contingency and asymmetry. (Bull 2000:12)

Hence, I replace the personal stereo with the mobile and simulate the work of Bull to build a picture of mobile phone usage in everyday life using diaries, focus groups and interviews. Whilst gathering the qualitative data I encouraged the participants to speak for themselves so my analysis can reveal the sedimented meanings underlying their everyday lives.

The sample consisted of 15 mobile phone owners aged between 16-45. The youngest amongst the group (six girls and four boys aged 16-17) were asked to complete a diary of their mobile phone usage, detailing where and when calls and text messages were sent and received, at what time, from and to whom, and, most important, how the communication made them feel.

These diaries were coded and three themes of interest were identified; the contextual framing of use, the changing mental and emotional states of use, and the element of time in mobile phone use. These issues were raised in the focus groups where contributions highlighted an additional theme of mobile phones restructuring social relationships.

Analysis

A delicate web of interrelated themes arises, all stemming from the co-configuration of the individual and technology. New behaviours and rituals arise from the use of the mobile which affect users' management of their everyday lives. These effects can be envisioned as interconnected themes or the radial threads of a web which encompass aspects such as relationship management, presentation of the self and new experiences for the user. These threads are subsequently interrelated by a spiral weft of time and space, building a rich understanding of how mobiles co-configure everyday life.

The overwhelming issue at hand is the co-configuration of the user and polysemic technology, which highlights how significantly the mobile is incorporated into daily activities both intentionally and unconsciously.

Co-Configuration of the User

My empirical data illustrate that certain technical qualities of the mobile can have profound effects on its user. The theme is recurrent, and is illustrated in many interrelated ways. My findings reveal tendencies and patterns of behaviour across users, but these are sometimes differentiated according to gender or generation. I have attempted to gather the data in as logical a manner as possible, although interweaving lines of thought will be identifiable as the analysis progresses. The identified developments can seem contradictory; users feel accessible yet isolated, mobile yet constrained by perpetual contact. Communication is instantaneous, yet is entirely dependent upon the user receiving the call or message. Interaction is simultaneously private and public, impersonal yet personal (Roos 1993).

To summarise, the co-configuration of the mobile is the key to unlocking the meaning and significance of the mobile in everyday life. The particular properties of this technology create new behaviours which both reflect and generate new social uses of mobile phone technology.

Reconfiguration of Time and Space

Interwoven with the radial thread of new uses configuring new behaviours are the interlocking spiral wefts of time and space. These themes pervade all aspects of the use of the mobile in everyday life, so while it is appropriate to consider them here, their significance should be recalled throughout. The fact that the mobile makes users available 24/7 has not only an impact on time but also on space. This in effect allows users to redraw the boundaries between public and private space in their lives. This has a further effect on relationships: previous private interactions can now impinge into the public domain.

The social etiquette of answering mobiles in public was pursued in the focus groups, but both teenagers and adults decided that etiquette is solely dependent on the situation. It is interesting that they felt there is no right or wrong way to handle incoming calls when in the presence of others.

New Frames of Use

The Production and Redefinition of Need.   The production of "need" is typical of many commodities of modern consumer culture. Slater (1997) contends that consumer capitalism provokes unlimited and insatiable needs because they are:

> No longer fixed by nature or by the traditional social order. Whereas culture might subordinate need to higher values, consumer culture dreams up ever more needs and enslaves people to a vicious circle of unceasing need feeding off perpetual dissatisfaction. (Slater 1997:77)

The mobile can be used to meet a variety of needs; there is a varying contextual frame of use. It is contended that some of these uses are evoked by the very act of possessing the phone, as they are uses that did not exist prior to being a mobile phone user. This substantiates the view of technological determinism—the technology has produced new "needs" in the lives of its users. However, other data support the contradictory view that it is users who determine how the technology is used and configured. Perhaps it is therefore reasonable to propose a compromise. There is a symbiotic relationship in which neither the technology nor the user is dominant, but both are inextricably intertwined.

There are two main needs for which the mobile is used: functional and non-functional interaction. Functional interaction can be defined as goal-oriented or instrumental communication, using the mobile to fulfil personally defined aims and objectives.

> I use mine to find things out, it's quite handy when you need to know something quick. (Clare, 45)

Clare is goal-oriented when she uses her mobile phone. When there is a problem to be resolved Clare uses her mobile phone to complete the task on the spot. As an aspect of time management, Clare prefers to "do things while they're on my mind" rather than wait until she has access to a landline, or can resolve the matter in person. This, in turn, relieves her of future anxiety and concerns she may have experienced prior to using her mobile phone.

> It's fantastic. If I'm worried about a bill, or need to chase someone for something, I don't have to wait until no one can see me sneaking to use the school phone or wait until I get home—when I would probably have forgotten about it anyway! I've

paid for [the calls] already, so I may as well use it. (Clare, 45)

Clare's contractual agreement with the network provider stipulates that she can have 200 free minutes of calls a month, and therefore Clare automatically incorporates the cost of calls made throughout the day into her monthly bill. Clare is conscious of the amount of money she has to pay every month for having her mobile and subsequently utilises her mobile as she deems efficient. She sees her mobile as a service and way of life—like having a car; it is little use sitting on the driveway.

The cost-conscious, time-efficient use described here is resonant of a Marxist analysis. Capital markets, where time is money and communication is a commodity, drive the pace of life. Clare's quality of life is therefore enhanced by instantaneous communication at her convenience. Lorna on the other hand rarely uses her mobile phone for making calls:

No, I'll wait until I get home, unless it's really urgent. Don't know why, just habit I suppose. (Lorna, 40)

The individual differences illustrated here highlight the sedimented meanings underlying the daily experiences of users. The definition of "importance" is subjective, differing from individual to individual. Furthermore personal definitions can change over time.

I remember when I got mine for the first time. I swore that I would only use it for emergencies—breakdowns and stuff. It's funny what emergencies come up now—I had to call Harry the other day to make sure he recorded Corrie! (Janet, 45)

Here, Janet is referring to the shift of the mobile's functionality from actual life-threatening emergencies to superficial use for requests for non-essential information. The way Janet uses her phone has changed; owning the phone has evoked new needs. The phone has configured her behaviour, and her perception of what constitutes important use of the mobile has changed.

The teenagers' diaries illustrate that the mobile also fulfils a functional role for them. Their goal was normally information: calling employers to check hours and change shifts, and checking with friends about details and deadlines of homework. However, during the focus group session their interaction focused mainly on non-functional, non-instrumental interests.

This is not to imply that different ages use their mobiles in any identifiable ratio of functional to non-functional social interaction.

It is interesting to observe the potentially contradictory nature of the changes in behaviour or agency caused by the technology. An object that was meant to make life simpler, easier, more efficient and convenient paradoxically produces greater fragmentation of everyday experience and concentration, a radial thread which will be developed later.

The focus group data primarily raised issues of informal social interaction. This is defined as communication that is not undertaken in order to fulfil specified objectives. Keeping in touch, chatting and gossiping are all ways people interact informally and can symbolise the human equivalent of "social grooming" (Fox 2001). The participants described it as fun and feel that it is vital to "keep up to date with" people who are important in their lives.

Discussions revealed that the informal social interaction included gathering information on the caller's life, the lives of others known to both parties and matters of shared interest. Janet, Clare and Lorna chose text messages rather than calls for informal social interaction. I contend that this reflects the strength of the relationship between sender and recipient.

I always text. Well, I see them [friends] all day, everyday, at work, so there's no real need to call them. (Lorna, 40)

Lorna relies on text messages to stay in touch with her friends and nothing more. The texts are superficial in nature—"We arrange what we're going to do for lunch the next day"—and to keep in touch, sending wishes and greetings to the small circle of friends to whom she has given her phone number.

I'll see them soon anyway, so I'd rather not call them when I'd have to worry about how much money I have left on my credit. (Lorna, 40)

Yet again, cost-consciousness is observed, as Lorna acknowledges that during the call she would be concerned about how much it was costing her. She therefore sees text as a cheap means of keeping in touch. She also feels that it may

be unnecessary to call her friends as she meets with them regularly. However, all focus groups agreed that the mobile facilitated communicative "chat," and in effect, this increased the number of times they would contact each other about trivial matters.

My findings illustrate that this "chat" is not gender specific. The male participants readily admitted to using their mobile phone for trivial purposes.

> We talk about nothing most of the time. (Jason, 17)
> I'd check with a mate to see what he thought about this shirt I was going to buy. (Richard, 17)

Age was not identified as a variable either, as Janet, Clare and Lorna admitted to "talking nonsense all the time" as well. However, teenagers used calls and text messages to chat, whereas the elder participants opted for text messaging over calling. I propose that the main reasons for this are privacy, empowerment and duplicity.

Privacy, Empowerment and Duplicity.

> [I use text] cause it's great for gossiping, cause it's nice and private. I don't have my husband whining in the background 'you're not gossiping again are you?' I tell him it's just another one of those competition texts[11] and he's none the wiser! (Janet, 45)

The secrecy of text messaging has revolutionised the way in which people are practicing informal social interaction. The focus groups said that in the past, they would have called the recipient but found text messages to be a lot more entertaining due to their private nature.

> It feels a bit naughty doesn't it? Even if you're not doing anything wrong! [laughs] (Lorna, 40)

As mobiles can increase the privacy of interaction, Ito (2000) believes there is a subsequent empowering of those previously limited by the public nature of landlines in the home. Text messages can be read, replied to and deleted so that even the most suspicious of bystanders is unlikely to know what has been said between the sender and the recipient. If a phone call is received and is of a delicate nature, the user can walk away to where they have more privacy.

Here the design of the mobile facilitates private interaction even within public space and potentially duplicity. For example Janet could conceal her textual gossiping from her husband, just like teenagers could hide romantic conversations from their parents. When the boundary of public and private behaviour is redefined, it allows mobile phone users to create, develop and maintain secret behaviours because of its privatised nature. Drama and excitement can be injected into new relationships and the user can feel greatly entertained by this hidden method of communication. Once again the technology and agent are co-configured.

I too also contended that teenagers would be the most likely to experience the greatest shift in empowerment through use of the mobile. Landline telephones facilitate parents in monitoring and regulating their children's relationships with their peers, as any telephone conversations take place under family scrutiny. I can now add that this escape from surveillance is not confined to the age of the user and that mobile phone interaction enhances the ability of all users to participate in informal social interaction.

The privacy of text messaging seems fundamental to its success. It is, therefore, understandable that mobile phone users admit to being adventurous with the content of their text messages. Whereas older participants tended to use text messages as a means for keeping in touch with those people closest to them—to maintain existing relationships—the teenagers used text as a way to get to know people better, to build relationships. However, the mobile can complicate this process.

The Building & Breaking of Platonic & Intimate Relationships.   This generational difference between relationship maintenance and relationship creation illustrates that the mobile has introduced complex new boundaries between "close" relationships.

> I wouldn't have had my last three boyfriends if it wasn't for text! (Beccy, 17)

This has major implications for the presentation of self in everyday life, which will be covered in more detail later. Whilst participants acknowledged that texting helps build relationships, some people also blamed this technology for

breaking down relationships.

> Ah man, I had this girlfriend and she was totally paranoid. I found out she checked my phone for texts and stuff so I always had to be careful, cause sometimes she would read something into an innocent text message and go ape. So, I had to keep all her text messages—otherwise she would moan I didn't like her, and delete everyone else's. Thing is, I got this new phone and it has a 'Sent Messages' box, and I didn't know it was there. She was checking it though and saw I had been texting other girls. (Rob, 17)

This situation climaxed when Rob's girlfriend deleted all the numbers from his "memory," which will be discussed later. The point here is that informal social interaction is emancipated by the ability to express oneself more freely and flirt over 'private' text messages. However, text messages are only private if the user does not show others sent or received texts, and if others don't find them on your phone. The teenage girls also admitted that it would be common for them to compose and compare messages together.

> It's great, 'cos you can totally document your relationship and then you can remind yourself and show your friends how you got together with someone. It's dead sexy. (Carly, 17)

This previously inconceivable phenomenon illustrates that the technology produces new kinds of behaviour that couldn't exist until mobiles were adopted. This indicates that not only do informal social text messages bring the sender and receiver together, but they also act as a topic of discussion for other circles of friends or generate new kinds of rituals and performances around intimate life. The significant technological shift here is the speed at which relationships can be formed—which is only adequately reflected in the speed at which relationships are also broken. Old-fashioned "snail-mail" love letters could be kept and shown to friends during months of courting, but now the immediacy of text is creating new ways for people to form and break relationships.

New Modes of Presenting the Self in Everyday Life

People see their phone as a reflection of themselves and their status, they use it to communicate how they are feeling and to improve their everyday experience of life. (Michael Hulme cited in "Downtime" by Mark Lewis in Computer Weekly, May 20, 2003 www.computerweekly.com Accessed October 1st 2004)

The Presentation of the Self. The "self," argues Goffman, "is not an entity half concealed behind events, but a changeable formula for managing oneself during them" (1974:573). It is "a code that makes sense out of…the individual's activities and provides a basis for organizing them." (1971:366)

Goffman (1959) outlines the dramaturgical role of the self in everyday life; each individual has a role to play in scenes where he must play a part. Each actor has control over the way his audience perceives him and must evaluate the performance of his fellow actors. He must draw from past experience to ensure that he expresses himself in the desired fashion, whilst impressing upon his audience and fellow actors the role he wants to play.

In the global age however, the traditional roles which social actors are required to play are becoming less rigid, subsequently allowing the actor freedom of choice in how to present the self. The mobile can be used as a tool to create, manage and organise the presentation of the self, a prosthetic attachment which facilitates the configuration of identity and the organisation of the user (Lury 1998; Blom and Monk 2003). The need to experiment and extend the parameters of identity is reflected in the compulsive desire to obtain the latest model, the current fascia, up-to-date ring tones, downloadable games, covers and holders. The majority of the younger focus group members had had a phone since age 11, with one boy having one from age 10, another from age 12. Either way, the need to have a mobile phone was summed up concisely by Rob:

> Style! (Rob, 17)

Emphasis on the mobile as fashion items has been researched by Leopold Fortunati who believes that "the mobile is an accessory that enriches those who wear it, because it shows just how much they are the object of communicative interest, and thereby desired, on the part of others" (2002:54). However, I found that whereas all teens were conscious of the latest trends and models, the boys were more likely to actually seek the latest gadgets—such as camera attachments and downloadable games. The girls were happy with "whichever phone is cheapest—as long as it isn't a brick!" (Sarah, 16). The adults thought the constant new trends were "just gimmicks letting Vodafone line

Beckham's pockets some more" (Clare, 45).[12] Whether they had got their mobile phone free with a bank account, a bottle of juice, or as a gift, none of the teenagers knew of anyone who did not have a mobile phone, but the notion of mobile-phone-as-fashion-accessory was not entirely justified. It seems it has less to do with the model of phone than the fact that you own one.

> You need one to fit in. (Greg, 16)

This statement acknowledges the influence of peer pressure and the desire to belong. It now seems that it is not so trendy to "have one to fit in". It now seems that to be really cool you need to have two mobiles. Louise (17) admitted that she owned two mobiles; one she used daily, carried with her at all times, her main phone, and one that she used in order to select her own social group. Two other girls explained that some of their friends had two phones, and the boys did not seem surprised that this occurred. None of the boys or their male friends had a second phone.

The "two-phone" issue will be discussed later in association with the impact this has on the management of relationships, but cannot be ignored here. Louise's second phone is an occasion for her to practice perfect fluidity in her relationships, therefore disentangling herself from solid, grounded relationships.

Tia de Nora (2002) states that "music is used as a referent for the clarification of identity."[13] In other words, an individual's taste in music can further compound her sense of identity. I propose that Louise's need to have two mobiles is a way of strengthening her subjective belief that she can be selective when it comes to choosing her friends; her friendship is an exclusive prize that can be won only by passing the tests she assigns her newest acquaintances. This reinforces her self-image as the popular socialite.

The Management of the Self.   Using a mobile phone in public, whether in discourse or text, is behaviour from which others will make inferences. Public mobile phone use is a way for people to practice identity management. An example of Plant's research includes a man dressed in an expensive suit sitting on a train, loudly discussing the fantastic business deal he just clinched with a colleague on the other end of his mobile phone call. Then, much to his embarrassment, the mobile rings, illustrating how "phony" his call actually was.

In this situation, the man is fostering the impression that he is a successful businessman. He has prioritised this as the most essential role to convey to his audience at that point in time. However, the mobile did not have to ring in order to create embarrassment—maybe a close friend of his, a colleague or family member who knew he was not a successful businessman could have entered the train. This would also have caused embarrassment as his false performance would have been evident to people who were aware of his real role.

This example is a perfect illustration of the complexity of impression management described here by William James:

> ...We may practically say that he has as many social selves as there are distinct groups of persons about whose opinion he cares. He generally shows a different side of himself to each of these different groups. Many a youth who is demure enough before his parents and teachers, swears and swaggers like a pirate among his "tough" young friends. We do not show ourselves to our children as to our club companions, to our customers as to the labourers we employ, to our masters and employers as to our intimate friends. (William James)[14]

This incident reinforces the need for audience segregation as described by Goffman (1959). It is necessary for the user to separate the people in front of whom s/he acts out different roles. Audience segregation will be explored more under the heading of "New Means of Relationship Management" as the issue at hand here is the implication for the self, not others.

Mobile phone technology enables users to freely experiment with the identity they want to portray to their audience; they can play numerous different roles. Mobiles also increase the ability of users to maintain contact with more people in private; consequently, the user has entirely different audiences who are unaware of her alter ego. Therefore, when the mobile user is contacted by one audience whilst in the vicinity of another, the user is placed in a compromising situation—whether to play the role expected of the proximal audience, or to play the role expected by the audience at the other end of the mobile line. For example, Chris was recently "caught out" when his employer called him on his mobile when he was in the pub watching football.

> Yeah, [lying] can get you in all kinds of trouble! I pulled a sicky and just spoke to the supervisor who said it was fine. My boss then called me up while I was in the pub and I didn't know whether to pretend to be sick when I knew he'd probably

hear the noise from the pub. All my mates were laughing at me for being so bothered about it, but it 's hard to know what to do. (Chris, 16)

It becomes increasingly complicated to manage a multiplicity of roles. Paradoxically, the mobile gives the user freedom to experiment with the notion of self, but the inability to maintain control over audience segregation results in a potentially fragmented identity.

One of the consequences of being contactable "24/7" is that impression management becomes difficult to sustain. It requires skill to maintain the varying notions of self and to ensure that the right persona is adopted before the right audience. Like any good actor, the role must be learnt off by heart, remembered and performed upon demand.

New Forms of Sociality

Fluid Relationships. Bauman defines the changing nature of relationships as "liquid love":

Having no bonds that are unbreakable and attached once and for all,...the denizen of our modern society... today must tie together what bonds they want to use as a link to engage with the rest of the human world by their own efforts with the help of their own skills and dedication. Unbound they must connect...None of the connections that come to fill the gap left by the absent or mouldy bonds are, however, guaranteed to last. Anyway, they need to be only loosely tied, so that they can be untied again, with little delay, when the settings change—as in liquid modernity they surely will, over and over again. (Bauman, 2003: vii)

The fluidity of modern relationships is assisted by the use of technologies such as Internet dating, e-mails, instant messaging and mobiles. Ultimately, interpersonal bonds are loose, quickly tied and quickly broken.

Unlike 'real relationships,' 'virtual relationships' are easy to enter and to exit. They look smart and clean, feel easy to use and user-friendly, when compared with the heavy, slow-moving, inert messy 'real stuff'. A twenty-eight year old...pointed to one decisive advantage of electronic relation: 'you can always press 'delete.' (Bauman, 2003: xii)

The loose nature of interpersonal bonds was clearly illustrated when one of the focus group members discussed the difficulty of recalling numbers she rarely used—such as those of old school friends and people she met on holiday. Losing her mobile had further loosened the bonds of these fluid relationships. I asked whether losing these contacts was important to her:

Well, I don't know. I never called them, if that's what you mean. It is just kind of expected now though, if you get on with people, to swap numbers. And maybe you do intend to call them, but then, after a while you realise that you would probably have nothing to talk about. It's good to have their number though anyway, just in case. (Andrea, 16)

I asked if she had wanted to get to know these people more.

Nah, it's just like, if you don't take their number at the end of the conversation, you're basically saying that the last half hour—however long it is you were talking for—was a waste of time, 'cos you don't want to see them again. I don't know whether it's for me or them—I suppose it might be both of us? (Andrea, 16)

Yeah, I know what you mean. If it's someone you used to be friendly with and then you've grown apart or something, you need to play nice and not let on you don't have anything in common anymore. Or if it's a friend of a friend you feel almost obliged to be friends with them. (Louise, 17)

It seems that these feelings of obligation are becoming more prolific with the common use of the mobile. The process of individualisation would postulate that the urge to accumulate a growing mountain of numbers is in order to guarantee that each person has the widest of social spectrums to choose from; you can be the reminiscing schoolmate, the doting daughter and the rock chick girlfriend all in the same day. This resonates with the configuration of the self, previously discussed.

Another interesting aspect is highlighted in the passage above. There is an unspoken understanding amongst the teenagers that the taking of numbers does not necessarily mean that the individuals involved desire to pursue the relationship. There may be a new social etiquette forming when it comes to the giving and taking of acquaintances' contact details.

New Influences on Human Capacity

Impact on Memory. Not only has the mobile caused changes in use, it has also produced new kinds of behaviour or agency. From my research, it is obvious that mobiles have had a significant impact on the nature of memory. The use of speed dialling has made the phone book and numerical memory virtually redundant. Phone numbers are no longer learnt "off by heart." The technological prosthesis, by taking over functions that were formerly human, actually reduces the human capacity to function in the same way. The technical memory function on the mobile has developed into a need to have it, as our former capability to store numbers in our heads is disabled. Jason (17) described how his memory had been affected by mobile phone use.

> I even forgot my home phone number the other day! (Jason, 17)

Once a mobile is lost, stolen or damaged, the user has, potentially, lost the numbers of everyone they were in contact with before. Therefore, one of the biggest concerns of the teenagers in the sample was losing their mobile phone, complete with all their friends' telephone numbers. This was equivalent to losing their "memory."

> It's not so bad for those people you see everyday, but I had the number of people, you know, from holiday, old school friends. I'll never see them again to get their number back. (Andrea, 16)

The teenagers relied on the memory function of their mobiles rather than their own memories, as did Clare, Janet and Lorna.

> I can never find the address book anymore, cause I never need it! All the people I ever call are in my mobile. (Janet, 45)

I then enquired about who wasn't "in" Janet's mobile.

> People I never call. Old relatives and neighbours who I don't ring very often. Actually, tends to be those people without mobiles—if I don't need to text them I don't need their number. (Lorna, 40)

I postulate that forgetting contacts' phone numbers is not just a result of reliance on speed dialling but ultimately, and perhaps more significantly, a result of the changing nature of relationships. People don't just forget the numbers but the people whom the numbers represent. This is because all relationships and bonds are fluid and no longer committed to heart.

Relationships are catalogued and stored until a time arises when it is in the user's interest to pursue the relationship. This can be likened to a squirrel hoarding provisions—people "hoard" the number of a new contact in case they wish to pursue this "relationship" later. There is a transformation in the way users perceive durable and transient relationships and a decreasing ability to distinguish between them.

Impact on Concentration. Having observed students disperse after class, it was surprising to note that the first thing each child did was to reach for their mobile phone. Concerns abound that mobile phone users are distancing themselves from the world around them and that instead of enjoying the scenery or the people one meets by chance, they are too engrossed in their "virtual" mobile world (Plant 2000). Teenagers and adults alike reported the mobile as being a distraction. For example, Rob (17) spoke of how he is perpetually conscious of his phone, even when calls or responses to sent texts were not expected or even wanted.

> It was the other night, and I was trying to study and I just kept looking at my phone. God knows how long I've been doing it for, but I just felt the urge to be with it, sometimes I feel like it is just me and it in a bubble. And I don't know what I was waiting for, but I just kept thinking 'someone might call' or 'someone might text.'

This heightened awareness of contactability and lowering of concentration may be specific to Rob, but other members in the focus group agreed.

> I think it's when I get bored in class or something, and my mind wanders away, but it seems like my first thought is always 'has someone tried to call'? And sometimes I just have to check my phone, like, that minute, right then. (Sarah, 16)
> And then the teacher tells you off for fiddling with yourself under the table![group laughs] (Beccy, 17)

The long-term impact of concentration and studying techniques cannot be confirmed with such a small sample, but

this insight will be developed later under the theme of obsessive-compulsive use.

New Forms of Experience for the User as Subject

The Nature and Character of the User. Co-configuration has an effect on the nature and character of the user as a subject. This particular technology and its particular properties generate new forms of experience. Emotions are experienced which affect behaviour and these are dependent upon the self and the interpretation of the scenario, text or call. Although it is acknowledged that the interactional aspects of mobile phone use depend upon a second party, I argue that whether or not mobile phone users initiate or respond to calls or texts messages, and how they do so, reflects back upon the self. I will demonstrate that the user does not require a second party to experience changes in their emotional state. The effect of mobile phone usage on the nature and behaviour of the user can be classified under the headings below.

Self-centered Empathy. When I asked how receiving calls and texts made them feel, participants replied positively:

> Means someone's thinking of you. (Rob, 17)
> Someone loves you! (Andrea, 16)
> It's exciting, you wonder who wants to talk to you. (Greg, 16)
> Unless you're at school or work and then it can just be dead embarrassing. (Rob, 17)

The recipient projects a meaning to the incoming message which leads to attributing similar motives to the sender. This interpretation of communication as indicative of an emotional state is reflected in the way the girls behave towards others around them:

> Getting a text makes you feel wanted, so if I see a friend and they seem down, when we go our separate ways I send them a text to let them know that I'm thinking of them. (Kat, 17)

If the sentiment is not returned, the desire to try and cheer up the friend in future may be reduced.

> Well, I'll do it once or twice, but if they never do the same for me, why should I bother? There's no point in doing it if they aren't really your friend. (Kat, 17)

It seems apparent, then, that texting someone when they are miserable is not to make them feel better, but to make oneself feel better about having tried to relieve the friend's discomfort, and is actually driven by the desire to have your friends act in a similar way if you needed some support. Returning the text message is also deemed a benchmark of the quality of the relationship.

There is a gender difference here, though, as the men would not text something sentimental to a male friend who was miserable. Instead, they would text an invitation to the pub, to play pool or football. The men, however, would send sentimental texts to female friends of theirs who were feeling down.

Anxiety. The adult focus group sent text messages for gossip, fun or information. When a reply was not instantaneous the women agreed that the recipient must be busy, and did not pay second thought to it. The teenagers did, however, discuss at some length the thought processes behind the "single-blind anxiety" mobiles can initiate. Single-blind anxiety occurs because the mobile is essentially an interactive tool. When the caller/sender initiates contact and does not receive an immediate response the caller/sender is blind as to whether the recipient has received notification of the call/text message. Once again, meaning is attributed to communication or lack of communication. For example, the recipient may not have their mobile phone with them, they may be busy or in the shower. Had they been able to answer or respond, they would have done so accordingly. However, the recipient may also be ignoring the call because they do not want to have contact with the recipient or, in the case of a cheating spouse, the recipient may be with someone else. This uncertainty can lead to paranoia and anxiety until the recipient responds.

The situation described here is particularly problematic when it comes to text messages. The way written text is interpreted depends on the individual reader. The mindset of the individual, previous experiences and logic can lead to completely different conclusions being drawn from the same text. The best international example of this is the interpretation of religious texts, the bible and Qu'ran. This means that the author's intended content of the message can be lost in the reader's interpretation of it. Intent cannot be distinguished from content. The teenage

group acknowledged this problem and discussed the use of "smileys"—a collection of symbols, letters and numbers that imply meaning. "Smileys" are a means of anchoring the meaning of an ambiguous text which should reduce the possibility of misinterpretation. For example:

:o)	happy	;o)	winking
:0(	sad	:ox	kiss
>:o[	angry	:'(	crying
:-o	surprised	: $	confused

However, despite the potential ability of "smileys" to clarify intent, some of the teenagers were reluctant to use them.

> Nah, too much bother. (Carly, 17)
> No, they're wicked! Makes sure your mates know when you're being sarky. (Jason, 17)
> I suppose. I just can't be bothered though! (Carly, 17)
> But it's well worth it—saves grief if you don't want someone to take something the wrong way. (Jason, 17)

As text messages can be misinterpreted by the recipient without the intent of the sender, "smileys" can potentially relieve the risk of anxiety for both parties, anchoring the polysemy of the text. The author will not need to worry that they have been misunderstood, and the message is clear to the recipient. When I asked if text messages were taken the wrong way regularly, all teenagers agreed that it had happened to them at one time or another.

> Yeah, I got this one once, and I was like, what the hell is that supposed to mean?! I didn't know if my pal was being a bitch, but it just turned out I read it the wrong way. (Sarah, 16)
> It's really bad when you have fallen out with someone though, and you don't know if they're trying to be mean or nice. (Andrea, 16)
> I've done that—I wrote this text message and I knew it could be taken two ways, but I sent it anyway. Is that bad? (Sarah, 16) [laughs from group]
> Evil! (Andrea, 16)
> She deserved it! (Sarah, 16)

This acknowledges that the initiator can intentionally induce anxiety for the recipient by sending ambiguous text messages. Users are able to play with ambiguity.

> Sometimes, I'm sure I haven't done anything wrong, but I feel a bit nervous in case I've done something to upset someone without realising it (Louise, 17)
> Yeah, and you go racking your brain for the last time you spoke to them. (Rob, 17)

The focus group come up with words such as "confused," "angry," "cautious" and even "nauseous" to describe how they feel when they get such a text. Emotions are intensified due to the speed at which the mobile's technical properties allow users to communicate constantly and intensely. This is further compounded when there are no gestures, body language or tone of voice to help interpret the text. The teenagers believe that there are three ways to deal with this situation. The first solution is to ignore the text, waiting until you see the sender face to face. That way "You can tell from the way they stand and stuff" (Chris, 16) whether the text message was intended to cause harm. Secondly, you can respond stating your confusion in order to get the matter resolved as soon as possible, whichever intention was meant. The third outcome is to reply to the text, but does the recipient choose to respond to its "nice" or "nasty" meaning? Choosing to respond positively could alleviate the problem, as a second nasty response from the initiator will at least ease the confusion in the mind of the recipient. Choosing to respond negatively could make things worse. Like the conflicting interpretations of religious texts, confusion can lead to defensiveness and ultimately retaliation:

> It's dead bad though, isn't it, cause you can get all angry and then send it and its gone—poof! You can't change your mind and bring it back again. Then, before you know it, you've got World War Three on your hands! (Kat, 17)

However, the problem of single-blind anxiety is magnified when the sender is unaware that the intended content has been misinterpreted. As above, the sender then starts to question whether they have caused upset with their original text message. The speed and ambiguity of the communication compound misunderstandings.

Because text messages can be a practical way of saying things that one would not normally be brave enough to say to people's faces, mobiles can complicate relationships. If a mobile phone users have a problem with each other, text messaging can be used to avoid direct face-to-face interaction. Kat describes this below:

> I'd heard that I'd upset a friend of mine, and I knew that I might have done, but I daren't ask her to her face. So I sent her this text message, and it was kind of skirting the issue and I can honestly say I felt sick until she got back to me. (Kat, 17)

Should the recipient of this text have equal confusion as to the content of the message, a situation of double-blind anxiety would exist. The initiator is anxious as to which way the message will be interpreted and the recipient is equally unsure of the intent of the message. Both parties are gridlocked in anxiety. Greg offered a solution to stop this anxiety-cycle.

> Why don't you just call them and speak to them? That way neither of you are sitting around playing pop-psychology. Surely, if a friendship meant something to you, that's what you would do? (Greg, 16)

The tone of the voice can act as a way of judging intent, the group agreed, and decided that text messaging can "cause more trouble than it's worth" (Greg, 16). However, there are some concerns about the simplest option taking precedent over what seems to be a new kind of addictive entertainment.

Distraction and Recreation.

> It's kind of fun, though, isn't it? You know that you've sent it [the text message] and it can be taken in loads of different ways, and you wonder how the other person will respond. You kind of do it on purpose, then you're thinking about it until they get back to you. (Jason, 17)

Consequently, the speed, ambiguity and game-like interaction of text messaging can perhaps explain the obsessive-compulsive nature of its use particularly amongst teenagers.

The same anxieties and mind games were played with the call function of the mobile, mainly due to the "caller ID" facility.

> It's well worse though if you're calling someone to say you're sorry or something, then they don't answer and it's ringing and it's ringing. (Rob, 17)
> And you know that they know you've called. (Greg, 17)
> Yeah, so do you leave it and hope they call you back or keep calling? (Louise, 17)

Again, the single-blind scenario leaves the caller to speculate about the best cause of action for themselves and the recipient.

> Dunno, cause I'm never ready to leave a message, so I kind of feel that I have to call again to be polite, but I don't want to, cause then they will have two missed calls, which is a bit much. (Rob, 17)
> Nah, I'd keep calling 'til they answered!(Andrea, 16)
> Fair dues, girls call and call and never give you the chance to ignore it! (Greg, 16)

This discussion raised the issue of when it was socially acceptable to answer or not-answer calls.

> Depends on the situation, doesn't it? Whether it's an emergency or not (Jason, 17)

I asked Jason how he would know whether the call was an emergency unless he answered it, but he just re-iterated that it was dependent upon the situation. Later on in the group, an alternative line of questioning arose, when alternative opinions came up:

> I hate it when you've arranged to be with someone and they spend the whole time on their phone (Carly, 17)
> Yeah, a friend of mine came round the other night and she spent like, an hour, on the phone to her boyfriend. And I just thought—what's the point of you coming round here? (Beccy, 17)

This again highlights the subjective nature of defining "emergencies" and the blurring of what private behaviour is acceptable in public space.

The persistence of the women to make their point heard was not mirrored by the men in the group:

...because we have some pride! (Rob, 17)

Adults were not immune to such games, though; a very similar statement was made by Lorna.

There was this one time, this guy was messing me about I think, so I sent him a text, and I knew that it could be taken two ways, but I just figured that it would test him and his response would show, you know, whether he liked me or was just playing with me. (Lorna, 34)

Again, I believe that the anxiety and entertainment derived from these texts are not also dependent upon the ambiguity of the text message—also the ambiguity of the relationship between sender and recipient, hence the emotional turbulence experienced by both. There is an interrelationship between the thought process behind the compilation and receipt of text messages, and the resultant behaviour and experience following it. Ambiguous text messages exemplify co-configuration once more; the new functions available on mobiles result in new behaviours, which further compound the use and meaning attributed to mobile phone use. Lorna, like the teenagers, was unsure about where her relationship was heading, and her uncertainty was relayed back into the use of the technology. One reason behind this is:

You can say things in a text that you can't say face to face with someone (Chris, 16).

Courage. The text function on the mobile allows users to push their communication to the individual's limit. This can be positive:

I wouldn't have had my first few boyfriends if it weren't for text messaging. (Louise, 17)

It's a good way to break the ice with people you don't know that well yet. (Jason, 17)

However, the opportunity to misread the message, the friendship or relationship does not enable the relationships to evolve, and a good deal of face to face interaction is therefore required in order to maintain a strong bond in the early stages.

This once again illustrates the co-configuration theme—new features on the phone have led to new behaviours and emotions.

Obsessive-Compulsive Use. It became evident that many teenagers had become dependent on their phone. Its multiplicity of uses had made them believe that they are unable to function without it. They all needed to have their mobile phone turned on "24/7" (Rob, 17)

I always charge mine at night on my bedside table. It's like a ritual; I charge my batteries and so does he! It's there then if anyone needs me and as an alarm clock to get me up in the morning. (Rob, 17)

Louise went one step further:

It's like, even though I know it's gonna ring and light up and vibrate [when someone contacts me] I get paranoid I've missed a call or something. I will fall asleep with it in my hand and then when I wake up he's there right next to my pillow. (Louise, 17)
Yeah, you just need to know it's there. (Sarah, 16)
But it gets dead mad 'cos sometimes, I can't sleep and just toss and turn and look at my mobile, like someone had called or text and I hadn't noticed since the last time I looked—two minutes ago! [laughs] (Louise, 17)

Louise did seem genuinely concerned about this reflection on her own behaviour and commented "God, I've never realised how bad that is." It seems appropriate to liken this mobile phone dependency to a kind of technological security blanket. Both Rob and Louise talk about "needing" their mobile phone, although they could not rationalise their own behaviour. Another interesting point about the comments above is that both people anthropomorphised the mobile and even more interestingly, both considered their phone to have a male gender. Neither could justify why

they had done this, and hadn't realised they had done so.

This "need" to be with their mobile phone was not shared by the adult focus group who would turn their phone off—admittedly less and less the longer they owned it. Clare (age 45) got her phone for "emergencies," for example, in case her car had broken down. Although Clare had never needed to use it for this purpose, she compared the mobile to having a safety net.

> I know I probably don't need one, like, if I crashed or broke down—god forbid— someone else on hand would have one that I could use, but I suppose it's just good to know it's there. It's like a safety net, just in case. (Clare, 45)

Clare has had the phone for two years and started to use it on a daily basis eighteen months ago. She keeps the phone on for incoming calls from her family, her new definition of "emergency," and uses text with her friends as her outgoing means of communicating.

> I used to only have it on for when I wanted to use it, make a call or something. But I check it through the day now, on my breaks, in case one of you [implying Janet and Lorna] has text me. As for home, I don't mind turning it off, cause all my friends can get me at home, but I normally keep it on now. Don't really know why. I'll definitely turn it off if it's a special occasion though. (Clare, 45)
> Oh, but be careful Clare, that's how I started… I turned mine off at the theatre the other week and checked it in the toilets in case anyone had called or text! (Janet, 45)

It seems that the use of the phone can become slowly addictive, from "my gran's got a mobile phone…in a plastic bag in the bottom drawer" (Chris, 16) to the dependency described above. This growing obsession with the phone can be compared to the addictive feelings experienced by smokers, drinkers and drug addicts. In this context, the term "user" does not simply refer to the practice of utilising a mobile phone. It has connotations of a physical, psychological and at times irrational, dependency on a technological communications device. This may be positive, as it could reduce dependency on tobacco, alcohol and drugs. Ann Charlton and Clive Bates, Director of Action on Smoking & Health UK (ASH), wrote to the British Medical Journal to discuss the correlating relationship between the decline in teenage smoking and the increase in mobile phone use. Although acknowledging that it may not be a causal relationship, Bates suggests that teenagers would rather spend their disposable income on their pay-as-you-go phones.

> It's more than something to do with the hands, mobiles are smart, chic and adult. They allow individuality and self-image to be projected through choice of brand and mobile and, like cigarettes, they are important in socialising. (Charlton and Bates 2000:1155)

New Means of Relationship Management

New Strategic Definition of Relationships.   To approach the issues of relationship management it is necessary to define how the participants subjectively defined their relationships with people they call and text from their mobile phone.

The people the older focus group had in their "memory" were very close friends and family. Friends and family they see regularly were the ones contacted the most and more often than not they would text rather than call. I have already discussed the motivation that determined whether users chose text versus call. Text messages would be sent to friends who are not in geographical proximity, those who are not seen regularly, but this does not mean the bond between the friends or family is weaker. The focus group discussed that sometimes employment and other responsibilities can mean friends move further apart—but this does not weaken the bond.

> That's why text can be so good. If you haven't spoken to someone you really care about for ages because you've had other things on your mind, it doesn't mean you care about them any less. But it can be good to text them cause you don't know what's happening with them and their life. If you call you might be interrupting something so a text is a good way to initiate contact. Then you'll know whether it's safe to call. (Lorna, 40)

When the issue of missed calls arose I asked whether they ever purposely ignored calls because they did not want to talk to that individual.

> The only time I ever ignore a call is if I'm really busy, and then I'll call them back when I'm finished—even if I don't like

> them! [laughs] I mean, I get the odd cold-call and those mad 'you've won!' text messages but apart from that I would never give my number to someone I don't like (Janet, 45)

The crucial point here is that to give someone her phone number, Janet is already comfortable with the person as a friend and would want to hear from him or her again in future. There is already a sense of strength in the relationship prior to giving out her number. This may be due to the stability in Janet's life and her confident self-image. Janet feels comfortable with her definition of friend, acknowledging that this impacts on the presentation of herself. Thus, she gives her number only to those she defines as suitable to be a friend. As the teenagers are less certain as to how to define and present themselves, they do not have such strong specifications of who gets their number. I have already outlined the complexity of impression management and how numerous roles compound difficulties. Therefore it is only natural that once the teenager has experimented with playing a new role with a new group of "friends" and decided that they do not want to portray that image any longer, they want to discard that relationship. The bond was always loose and weak in order to facilitate immediate release from it.

I sensed, however, that when people have a strong relationship, built on the foundation of family or really knowing someone, the mobile can strengthen the bond. For example, the adults commented that the giving of the mobile phone acts a way of keeping in touch with those closest to them. However, mobiles can also be used to control those closest to you.

Tactical Relationship Development and Modes of Defence.   When discussing the potential for the mobile to play an active part in the organisation and construction of social space Louise (17) did not question the use of two phones for different levels or hierarchies of friends. It seems that it is now common to own two phones—one carried at all times, in order to be contacted at all times, and another to be checked less frequently, as a means to manage who contacts you and when.

> Sure, I've got two phones. Loads of my friends have. Say you meet someone at a party...it means that if you're not sure about someone, you give 'em your second number. Then, if you like 'em later, when you know 'em better, they get promoted, like, to your proper number. I used to hand out a false number all the time, and still do, to the plebs. This second phone is for the 'unsures' that I haven't decided about yet. (Louise, 17)

When asked whether Louise had any concerns about the other person finding out about this form of deception, she continued:

> Nah. If they didn't like it, it's probably 'cos they didn't get upgraded in the first place. They're just bitter cause I can be picky with who my mates are. My mates which have been promoted think it's funny. Those which wouldn't find it funny would never get promoted—and that's the whole point! I'd never be friendly with someone who didn't understand my need to be selective, y'know? (Louise, 17)

I then asked Louise whether she would ever feel concerned that she was given a second rate phone number by another person, and be ranked as an "unsure" herself.

> Nah... It's cool. I understand...if it's someone I want to be friendly with. I'd be really annoyed if it was a pleb rubbishing me though! You see, some people you need the right number for—some people you want the right number for. Either way, each person has their designated place in my phone. I know I'll be number one in someone's phone, and last in someone else's. It's all cool. (Louise, 17)

From Louise's account, it seems the mobile is a tool which transforms, boosts and expands Goffman's conversational preserve—the control over who can summon one into dialogue and when he or she can be summoned into it (Goffman 1971). By denying or giving access to the mobile number, Louise is dictating who has access to her.

New Means to Hurt and Attack.   The management of everyday life via the mobile is not simply facilitated by the mobile use of the individual, the self. It also relies upon social structures of support to acknowledge individuals' existence via the mobile network. The fact that the mobile is an interactive technology requires someone to call or someone to answer. In this interaction dependent framework, the mobile has been noted as a tool, a weapon as it were, to hurt others.[15]

An abusive way to use the mobile in everyday life involves bullying. Bullying was acknowledged as a way to hurt others—a spiteful attempt to bombard the victim with psychological abuse: taunts, crude remarks and insults.

I know it goes on. It did a lot when we were younger, I think. People picked on the little ones. (Louise, 17)
We've kind of grown out of that now though. (Sarah, 16) [laughs from the group]
It's well tight though. (Louise, 17)

There was genuine compassion from the group, and all knew or had heard of someone who had been affected at one time in the past by textual bullying. One of the group highlighted that it was no different from hate mail:

Well, it's been going on forever hasn't it? Nasty notes passed around class, text abuse. It's all the same, nothing's changed. It's quicker, that's all. (Rob, 17)
Nah, it's worse! It's just wrong! (Louise, 17)

When I probed the group for why the use of mobiles in this manner was so wrong, none could identify in any clarity why they thought it worse than, say, face-to-face bullying. However, further investigation would suggest that using the mobile in this way is far more personal than hate mail. As the mobile tends to be carried around at all times by the owner, they can be abused, at all times. They do not only fear the arrival of the post in the morning; they feel dread at every incoming call and text. The attacker is constantly with them, able to strike perpetually. Louise had had a falling out with a friend and described how receiving abusive text messages made her feel:

It's awful, 'cos it's not like you can hang up like a phone call. They're there, and you have to read it all in case you think they might say sorry at the end of the text. But they aren't, and then the next time your phone goes you feel sick in case it's them again. (Louise, 17)

Textual harassment has become such a problem that it is now classified as a criminal offence.[16] The focus groups were aware that the caller/sender identity can be used to track not only the number of the phone, but also the area of use to enable policing of such activity.

There's that thing where people can tell if you're doing it now though. It certainly isn't secret. You can trace it. (Rob, 17)
And the school would come down hard on you if you did. (Louise, 17)

The adult focus groups were also aware of the use of mobiles to bully others. However, I was able to ascertain that this may be specific to their occupation—classroom assistants—they had been cautioned to be aware of the problem. Even though mobiles are prohibited in class, the adults were aware that they may have little impact on textual bullying and mobile phone harassment.

I mean, they aren't allowed to use them, but we can't really stop them. Even if we could, there is a problem of identifying which messages were upsetting because of something bad happening, or which were intentionally hurtful. (Janet, 45)
Yeah, you have to trust the kid to come to you with a problem. (Clare, 45)

In contrast, Nicola, who is a mature student and not accustomed to the school environment, was unaware that mobiles could be used to hurt and harass.

Well, I'm glad they didn't have them when I was young then! I would never give out my number! (Nicola, 29)

However, with the increasing use of mobiles, it seems that bullies have a new way to torment their victim—revolving around not having their number. An example from within the focus group:

You know what I hate? When you give someone your number, and then you call them, and they don't answer. And you saw them put your number in their phone, and then when you say 'I called you, you didn't answer, why didn't you answer?' they're like 'well, I don't have your number'. And you know they do have your number and they're just being awkward. This guy kept on doing it to me and I don't give him my number anymore. (Greg, 16)

Greg stood out in this particular focus group as very socially aware of others' intentions, and was not discouraged by this selective behaviour.

It's good to know that the friends I've got are true friends, not fair-weather friends. I'm glad he doesn't have my number (Greg, 16)

It seems that the deletion of numbers is quite prolific, as another member of the same group continued:

> That sucks mate. Shit, I remember when my ex girlfriend went through my (mobile phone book) memory and deleted all the girls numbers. Bloody mental. [laughs] That's why she's my ex! It took me forever to get all those numbers back! Actually, some I'll never get back. Bitch! (Rob, 17)

This example illustrates two important things. Primarily, the mobile signified a threat to Rob's then-girlfriend to such an extent that she was compelled to take drastic action. Her own paranoia was alleviated to some extent by the knowledge that Rob would then be unable to contact other women in his life.

Liberating Restraints and Self-Imposed Regulation

The existence of mobiles in daily life allows users to be monitored by the authorities[17] and others with access to their phone. The physical giving of the mobile to a friend or family member can also be symbolic of simultaneously liberating and restraining the user by facilitating perpetual contactability. Behaviour can be further restricted by the financial constraints that underpin mobile phone usage.

Liberating Restraints. The example of Rob's girlfriend (above) indicates her desire to exercise control over his social relationships. Plant suggests that because mobiles can act as tools of surveillance, a person intending to be unfaithful will have one phone for the married partner and another for the lover. This is not to suggest that the mobile is the cause of the affair, but it is worth noting that suspicions can be confirmed via the technological capabilities of the mobile: a record of incoming and outgoing calls and the last text messages sent and received. In Plant's study one girl noted how she always ensured that she saved the last message from her boyfriend "in case he checked"—like when Rob's girlfriend believed that not saving her text messages meant he did not care for her. The mobile seems to breed a feeling of insecurity for those with suspicions, who cannot contact the mobile owner. As one philanderer said:

> I would like to turn off my mobile when I'm in bed with someone, but my wife suspects I'm being unfaithful if she can't reach me. (Plant 2000:55)

The adult group, however, had not even contemplated using the mobile as a means to restrict the social interaction of their partner. But they were conscious as parents that giving their children mobiles was a significant means of managing their lives.

> I gave [mobiles] to the boys so I could get hold of them when I wanted. Make sure I would know what they were up to, that they were safe. (Clare, 45)

Bestowing the mobile was likened to slackening the reigns, allowing more space for the child. However, it is also apparent that this prestigious giving of rights is also a way for Clare to get hold of the sons at all times—just in case. Interestingly, later on in the interview, I was able to ask under what circumstances she actually called her eldest son.

> To be honest, I never call him. He'd kill me! I only ever text him, and if I need to speak to him, I'll write that in a text so that he knows I'm going to call. Yeah, otherwise I'd get into trouble with him for embarrassing him in front of his mates. So, yeah, if I'm out to pick him up from the pub, I'll text him and let him know I'm outside. That way, he can come out when he's ready and his friends can't call him a mummy's-boy (Clare, 45)

Self-Imposed Restriction. Despite the teenagers' awareness of the mobile's ability to contact others and resolve emotional conflicts, they often chose not to as it would cost them too much money. Whereas the adults were prepared to pay a price for convenience, the teenagers were less willing to work out problems using their mobile phone. It seems their needs revolve more around saving money than solving dilemmas. In the example below, Kat explains how a problem with a friend could have been resolved smoothly with a mobile phone conversation, but was prolonged because neither of them would call the other:

> Of course, I could have called them. But that would have cost me loads at that time of the day. So you just leave it don't you. Hey, if it's that important to them, they should have called me. Why should I be the one to make the first move? (Kat, 17)

The choice is made and both Kat and her friend stubbornly stick to their idea of who should act first. This example also illustrates how users try to second-guess what the other person should do, knowing that they could call. A paradoxical situation arises where the user is liberated in the way they can communicate, but bound by the knowledge that others will interpret their response or non-response. A generational trend is also uncovered as phone calls are

used to alleviate adults' anxiety whereas mobiles can induce it in the teenagers.

Conclusions

I conclude that Giddens' comment on technology is pertinent to the mobile:

> Some of the influences that were supposed to make life more certain and predictable for us, including the progress of science and technology, often have quite the opposite effect. (Giddens 1999b:2-3)

The polysemy of mobile phone technology has a complex, co-configuring effect on its user. Encompassing all public and private relationships at all points in time, the mobile has far-reaching consequences for the self in everyday life. Polysemy leads to contradictory developments in use. Convenient instantaneous communication is accompanied by perpetual consciousness of contactability. The ease with which people can now communicate underlies anxiety of not being contacted. Raised awareness of the proximity of friends, relatives, employers, services and bullies can subsequently influence the mental state of the user. The mobile can increase the metabolic rate of everyday life whilst simultaneously fragmenting daily experience; it can liberate and enhance individual self experimentation whilst constricting and complicating identity management. The popularity of quick, easy and private text messaging has ironically been identified as causing ambiguity and anxiety or even provoking new kinds of group reflection on communicative processes.

Although the sample size is limited, I am still able to identify some gender and generational differences. The main generational trend established was that mobiles were used by the older participants to maintain, strengthen and manage existing relationships, whereas the teenagers were still in the process of developing, organising and, in some cases, manipulating their relationships. It is unclear to what extent this behaviour is the result of teenagers' immature social networks, the growing trend of fluidity of relationships, or is stimulated by the technology itself. The evidence suggests that the technology itself seems to be eliciting fluid behaviour, although I would recommend a larger phenomenological study using similar methods in order to clarify this.

The differences in gender are less obvious. This may have been due to my predominantly female sample. Nevertheless, I identified some variations in behaviour: although both genders (and generations) acknowledged the growing market of mobile phone technology, the males were keen to own a mobile phone with the latest technological functions, whilst the women did not feel the same desire. The males were also less likely to be sentimental with their male counterparts, but both genders felt the mobile enabled them to express themselves more freely to the opposite sex. Both genders described feelings of dependence on the mobile, anthropomorphising it as male.

However, the evidence also suggests an equality of use driven neither by gender nor generation. All participants would use the phone when they subjectively defined a situation as an "emergency," but used the mobile more frequently for informal social interaction and gossip. Everyone believed that no social etiquette could be determined as public social use depends on the specific situation in question. A change in human agency and heightened anxiety was also experienced by both gender and generation when the mobile was used in ambiguous situations.

The polysemy of the mobile is likely to increase as the mobile becomes more of a mobile multi-media communication station than mobile phone. A recent telecommunications article went so far as to say that the mobile is about to become extinct.

> Your communication device will be your mobile TV, Video, Camera, Camcorder, Internet, emailer, Route Finder, Games console, Radio, Address book, Record collection…The list is endless and that's only on current technology. (Harper 2004)

I am able to conclude that the impact of perpetual contactability is significant enough to warrant further research into this area and that the combination of mobile and personal visual, audible and interactional technology will also have considerable effects on the everyday lives of their users. Future studies will need to explore the potential impact of the extra functions of developing mobile communication devices on the daily life of their users.

John Thompson highlights another area worthy of further attention:

> The ways in which individuals make sense of media products vary according to their social background and circumstances, so that the same message may be understood in differing ways in different contexts. (John Thompson 1995:38)

A more detailed ethnographic approach may enable the researcher to develop this concept in greater depth. It is clear that consumer preferences regarding mobile phone technologies are deeply embedded in the considerations, themes and complexities of everyday life (Ropke 2003).

Endnotes

1. For example, politicians' involvement in extra-marital affairs or television celebrities and sports personalities' use of illegal drugs lead them to resign as the public perception of their private lives is no longer compatible with their public roles.

2. See, for example, Thorstein Veblen 1963.

3. Woolgar, Steve. 1991. "Configuring the User: The Case of Usability Trials." in John Law (ed.) The Sociology of Monsters. London: Routledge.

4. Vodafone 2003. "The British Mobile Communications Survey" conducted by MORI.

5. Survey undertaken by ananova for Orange 2002. "Mobile Owners Would Prefer to Lose their Wallet than their Phone."
http://www.ananova.com/news/story/sm_598172.html?=news.technology

6. The Guardian February 22nd 2003. "Affluent but Anxious and Alienated."

7. Page 21.

8. For the most comprehensive discussion on this issue, I recommend James E. Katz and Mark Aakhus 2002..

9. See http://mobilemomentum.msn.com/article.aspx?aid=12

10. Ibid. p. 10.

11. Both focus groups discussed the annoyance of getting text messages that claim that you have won prizes. 'CONGRATULATIONS! You have won £3,000! To claim your prize call/ text your name and age to 12345!' These texts are bogus and cost the caller up to £1.50 per text or per minute. All focus groups say they delete them and ignore them.

12. Clare is referring to the fashionable Vodafone television adverts using footballer David Beckham to promote the camera phone.

13. De Nora 2002: 44

14. Theodore Flournoy, The Philosophy of William James. Authorised translation by William James Jr. (London: Constable, 1917) in Erving Goffman 1959: 57.

15. "Bullying by Mobile Phone and Abusive Text Messages." Bully OnLine, website of the UK National Workplace Bullying Advice Line. www.bullyonline.org/related/mobile.htm

16. See the Telecommunications Act 1984 (s.43) and Protection from Harassment Act 1997.

17. See, for example, the case of Neil and Christine Hamilton who were cleared of sexual assaulting Nadine Milroy Sloane at a flat in Ilford, Essex, when their mobile phone use proved they could not have been at the scene of the alleged crime. (R v Milroy-Sloane, 13.06.03)

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Media Culture and the Triumph of the Spectacle

Douglas Kellner

During the past decades, the culture industries have multiplied media spectacles in novel spaces and sites, and spectacle itself is becoming one of the organizing principles of the economy, polity, society, and everyday life. An Internet-based economy has been developing hi-tech spectacle as a means of promotion, reproduction, and the circulation and selling of commodities, using multi-media and increasingly sophisticated technology to dazzle consumers. Media culture proliferates ever more technologically advanced spectacles to seize audiences and augment the culture industry's power and profit. The forms of entertainment permeate news and information, and a tabloidized infotainment culture is more and more popular. Emergent multimedia that synthesize forms of radio, film, TV news and entertainment, and the mushrooming domain of cyberspace, become spectacles of technoculture, generating expanding sites of information and entertainment, while intensifying the spectacle-form of media culture.

Political and social life is also shaped more and more by media spectacle. Social and political conflicts are increasingly played out on the screens of media culture, which display spectacles like sensational murder cases, terrorist bombings, celebrity and political sex scandals, and the explosive violence of everyday life. Media culture not only takes up expanding moments of contemporary experience, but also provides ever more material for fantasy, dreaming, modeling thought and behavior, and constructing identities. Its rituals like the Olympics, World Cup, and championship sports events, or entertainment rituals like the Oscar and Emmy awards celebrate the society's dominant values and validate a society based on competition and winning.

Of course, there have been spectacles since premodern times. Classical Greece had its Olympics, thespian and poetry festivals, its public rhetorical battles, and bloody and violent wars. Ancient Rome had its public offerings of bread and circuses, its orgies, its titanic political battles, and the spectacle of Empire with parades and monuments for triumphant Caesars and their armies, extravaganzas put on display in the 2000 film Gladiator. And as Dutch cultural historian Johan Huizinga (1986, 1997) reminds us, medieval life too had its important moments of display and spectacle.

The Eastern world also has its spectacles. In 2003, an exhibit on "Genghis Khan and His Legacies" at the Los Angeles County Art Museum displayed how Genghis Khan used military spectacle and power to conquer large segments of what we now see as the eastern sphere of the globe and how four sons of Khan founded the Chinese Empire, what is now Russia, Iranian civilization and the area of what are now the Stans (i.e, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and so on). These Genghis Khan Empires used military spectacle to advance their power and had displays of great ceremonial tents, art works, religious festivities, and political events to put on view their power.

Indeed, globalization itself expanded through military spectacle and Empire, and premodern history involves the spectacle of the rise and fall of the Roman Empire, the expansion and diffusion of the Genghis Khan empires, the spread and triumph of Christianity and Islam, and the rise of modern nation states and Western European and then US-dominated empires. In the early modern period, Machiavelli advised his "prince" about the productive use of spectacle for government and social control, and the emperors and kings of the modern states cultivated spectacles as part of their rituals of governance and power.

Popular entertainment long had its roots in spectacle, while war, religion, sports, and other domains of public life were fertile fields for the propagation of spectacle for centuries. Yet with the development of new multimedia and

information technologies, technospectacles have been decisively shaping the contours and trajectories of present-day societies and cultures, at least in the advanced capitalist countries, while media spectacle also becomes a defining feature of globalization in an era of terrorism and war.

In this study, I will provide an overview of the dissemination of media spectacle throughout the major domains of the economy, polity, society, culture and everyday life in the contemporary era and indicate the theoretical approach that I deploy. This requires a brief presentation of the influential analysis of spectacle by Guy Debord and the Situationist International, and how I build upon and differ from this approach, followed by an overview of contemporary spectacle culture that attempts to sketch contours of a critical theory of the contemporary moment.

Guy Debord and the Society of the Spectacle

The concept of the "society of the spectacle" developed by French theorist Guy Debord and his comrades in the Situationist International has had major impact on a variety of contemporary theories of society and culture. [1] For Debord, spectacle "unifies and explains a great diversity of apparent phenomena" (Debord 1967: #10). Debord's conception, first developed in the 1960s, continues to circulate through the Internet and other academic and subcultural sites today. It describes a media and consumer society, organized around the production and consumption of images, commodities, and staged events.

For Debord, spectacle constituted the overarching concept to describe the media and consumer society, including the packaging, promotion, and display of commodities and the production and effects of all media. Using the term "media spectacle," I am largely focusing on various forms of technologically-constructed media productions that are produced and disseminated through the so-called mass media, ranging from radio and television to the Internet and latest wireless gadgets. Every medium, from music to television, from news to advertising, has its multitudinous forms of spectacle, involving such things in the realm of music as the classical music spectacle, the opera spectacle, the rock spectacle, and more recently the hip hop spectacle. Spectacle forms evolve over time and multiply with new technological developments.

My main interest in Media Spectacle (Kellner 2003), however, is in the megaspectacle form whereby certain spectacles become defining phenomena and events of their era. These range from commodity spectacles such as the McDonald's or Nike spectacle to megaspectacle political extravaganzas that characterize a certain period, involving such things as the 1991 Gulf war, the O.J. Simpson trials, the Clinton sex and impeachment scandals, or the Terror War that is defining the current era.

There are therefore many levels and categories of spectacle. Megaspectacles are defined both quantitatively and qualitatively. The major media spectacles of the era dominate news, journalism, and Internet buzz, and are highlighted and framed as the key events of the age, as were, for instance, the Princess Diana wedding, death, and funeral, the extremely close 2000 election and 36 Day Battle for the White House, or the September 11 terror attacks and their violent aftermath, including, currently, the spectacle of Iraq. Megaspectacles are those phenomena of media culture which dramatize its controversies and struggles, as well as its modes of conflict resolution. They include media extravaganzas, sports events, political happenings, and those attention-grabbing occurrences that we call news--a phenomenon that itself has been subjected to the logic of spectacle and tabloidization in the era of media sensationalism, political scandal and contestation, seemingly unending cultural war, and the new phenomenon of Terror War. Megaspectacles, like the O.J. Simpson trials, the Clinton sex and impeachment scandals, or the ongoing Terror War dominate entire eras and encapsulate their basic conflicts and contradictions, while taking over media culture.

More generally, on my conception, media spectacle involves those media and artifacts that embody contemporary society's basic values and serve to enculturate individuals into its way of life (Kellner 1995, 2003). Thus, while Debord presents a rather generalized and abstract notion of spectacle, I engage specific examples of media spectacle and how they are produced, constructed, circulated, and function in the present era. As we proceed into a new millennium, the media are becoming more technologically dazzling and are playing an ever-escalating role in everyday life. Under the influence of a multimedia image culture, seductive spectacles fascinate the denizens of the media and consumer society and involve them in the semiotics of an ever-expanding world of entertainment, information, and consumption, which deeply influence thought and action. In Debord's words: "When the real world changes into simple images, simple images become real beings and effective motivations of a hypnotic behavior. The spectacle

as a tendency to make one see the world by means of various specialized mediations (it can no longer be grasped directly), naturally finds vision to be the privileged human sense which the sense of touch was for other epochs" (#18). According to Debord, sight, "the most abstract, the most mystified sense corresponds to the generalized abstraction of present day society" (ibid).

Experience and everyday life are thus shaped and mediated by the spectacles of media culture and the consumer society. For Debord, the spectacle is a tool of pacification and depoliticization; it is a "permanent opium war" (#44) which stupefies social subjects and distracts them from the most urgent task of real life--recovering the full range of their human powers through creative practice. Debord's concept of the spectacle is integrally connected to the concept of separation and passivity, for in submissively consuming spectacles, one is estranged from actively producing one's life. Capitalist society separates workers from the products of their labor, art from life, and consumption from human needs and self-directing activity, as individuals inertly observe the spectacles of social life from within the privacy of their homes (#25 and #26). The Situationist project, by contrast, involved an overcoming of all forms of separation, in which individuals would directly produce their own life and modes of self-activity and collective practice.

The correlative to the spectacle for Debord is thus the spectator, the reactive viewer and consumer of a social system predicated on submission, conformity, and the cultivation of marketable difference. The concept of the spectacle therefore involves a distinction between passivity and activity and consumption and production, condemning lifeless consumption of spectacle as an alienation from human potentiality for creativity and imagination. The spectacular society spreads its wares mainly through the cultural mechanisms of leisure and consumption, services and entertainment, ruled by the dictates of advertising and a commercialized media culture.

This structural shift to a society of the spectacle involves a commodification of previously non-colonized sectors of social life and the extension of bureaucratic control to the realms of leisure, desire, and everyday life. Parallel to the Frankfurt School conception of a "totally administered," or "one-dimensional," society (Horkheimer and Adorno 1972; Marcuse 1964), Debord states that "The spectacle is the moment when the consumption has attained the total occupation of social life" (#42). Here exploitation is raised to a psychological level; basic physical privation is augmented by "enriched privation" of pseudo-needs; alienation is generalized, made comfortable, and alienated consumption becomes "a duty supplementary to alienated production" (#42).

Spectacle Economy and Politics

Since Debord's theorization of the society of the spectacle in the 1960s and 1970s, spectacle culture has expanded in every area of life. In the culture of the spectacle, commercial enterprises have to be entertaining to prosper and, as Michael J. Wolf (1999) argues, in an "entertainment economy" business and fun fuse, so that the E-factor is becoming a major aspect of business. Via the "entertainmentization" of the economy, television, film, theme parks, video games, casinos, and so forth become major sectors of the national economy. In the U.S., the entertainment industry is now a $480 billion industry, and consumers spend more on having fun than on clothes or health care (Wolf 1999: 4).

Global media culture is increasingly dominated by giant megacorporations that combine entertainment, information, and a vast array of media and consumer products. During the 1980s and 1990s, television networks in the United States amalgamated with other major sectors of the cultural industries and corporate capital, including mergers between CBS and Westinghouse; MCA and Seagram's; Time Warner and Turner Communications; ABC, Capital Cities, and Disney; and NBC, General Electric, and Microsoft. In 1999, CBS fused with the entertainment colossus Viacom in a $38 billion megamerger. Dwarfing all previous information/entertainment corporation combinations, Time Warner and America On-Line (AOL) proposed a $163.4 billion amalgamation in January 2000, which was approved a year later. This union brought together two huge corporations involved in TV, film, magazines, newspapers, books, information databases, computers, and other media, suggesting a coming synthesis of media and computer culture, of entertainment and information in a new infotainment society.

The fact that "new media" Internet service provider and portal AOL was the majority shareholder in the deal seemed to point to the triumph of the up and coming online Internet culture over the old media culture. The merger itself called attention to escalating synergy among information and entertainment industries and old and new media in the form of the networked economy and cyberculture. Yet the dramatic decline in the AOL/Time Warner stock

price and corporate battles for control of the giant corporation illustrated the tensions between old and new media and the instabilities and uncertainties at the heart of global capitalism. The return to dominance of the corporation by the Time Warner forces in 2003 seem to deflate some of the hype concerning "new media" and the "new economy" (see Kellner 2003a).

In Europe also there have been increasing mergers of media corporations, the rise and decline of media giants like Vivendi and Bertelsmann, and the ascendance of new conglomerates to take the place of declining media empires. In France, the Dassault group, headed by a rightwing politician who controlled a media empire, has taken over the weekly Express and 14 other acquisitions, while another French rightwing group headed by Jean-Luc Lagardere, an associate of Jacques Chirac is France's biggest publisher, controls the magazine market and is attempting to expand into telecommunications (Ramonet 2002). In Italy, Silvio Berlusconi owns the three main private television channels and as prime minister now also controls state television, while in Spain the Prisa company controls major newspaper and other publications, as well as radio and television networks.

These amalgamations bring together corporations involved in TV, film, magazines, newspapers, books, information data bases, computers, and other media, suggesting a coming together of media and computer culture, of entertainment and information in a new networked and multimedia infotainment society. There have also been massive mergers in the telecommunications industry, as well as between cable and satellite industries with major entertainment and corporate conglomerates. By 2002, ten gigantic multinational corporations, including AOL Time Warner, Disney-ABC, General Electric-NBC, Viacom-CBS, News Corporation, Vivendi, Sony, Bertelsmann, AT&T, and Liberty Media, controlled most of the production of information and entertainment throughout the globe.[2] The result is less competition and diversity, and more corporate control of newspapers and journalism, television, radio, film, and other media of information and entertainment.

To succeed in the ultracompetitive global marketplace, corporations need to circulate their image and brand name so business and advertising combine in the promotion of corporations as media spectacles. Endless promotion circulates the McDonald's Golden Arches, Nike's Swoosh, or the corporate symbols of Apple, Intel, or Microsoft. In the brand wars between commodities, corporations need to make their corporate logo a familiar signpost in contemporary culture. Corporations place their defining brand images on their products, in ads, in the spaces of everyday life, and in the midst of media spectacles like important sports events, TV shows, movie product placement, and wherever they can catch consumer eyeballs to impress their brand name on a potential buyer. Consequently, advertising, marketing, public relations and promotion are an essential part of commodity spectacle in the global marketplace.

In a global media culture, celebrities are the manufactured and managed deities of the contemporary moment. Celebrities are the icons of media culture, the gods and goddesses of everyday life. To become a celebrity requires recognition as a star player in the field of media spectacle, be it sports, entertainment, business, or politics. Celebrities have their handlers and image managers to make sure that their stars continue to be seen and positively perceived by publics. Just as with corporate brand names, celebrities become products to sell their Madonna, Michael Jordan, Tom Cruise, or Jennifer Lopez commodities and brand image. In a media culture, however, celebrities are always prey to scandal and thus must have at their disposal an entire public relations apparatus to manage their spectacle fortunes, to make sure their clients not only maintain high visibility, but also keep projecting a positive image. Of course, within limits, transgressions can also sell and so media spectacle always contains celebrity dramas that attract public attention and can even define an entire period, as when the O.J. Simpson murder trials and Bill Clinton sex scandals dominated the media in the mid and late 1990s.

Indeed, contemporary politics is controlled by the logic of media spectacle. The Gulf war of 1991 was arguably the first event of the global village where the entire world watched a build-up to war and then dramatic real-time military action against Iraq after it invaded Kuwait in the summer of 1990 (see Kellner 1992). The Clinton era featured sex and impeachment spectacles and was capped by the most dramatic election spectacle in US history as Al Gore and George W. Bush found themselves in a dead-heat on election night, which was first leaning toward Gore, then called for Bush, and then declared "too close to call," leading to the spectacle of a 35 day recount war in Florida, in which the US Supreme Court declared the winner in a 5-4 vote that many see as illegitimate and a stolen election (Kellner 2001). The torpor of the Bush presidency was aroused by the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and subsequent Bush administration wars in Afghanistan and Iraq (Kellner 2003b).

In other parts of the world, media spectacle proved to be a major factor in the Spanish March 2004 election where the socialist party candidate upset the conservative party Prime Minister predicted to win an easy victory,

when Spain and the global village experienced in horror the spectacle of a series of terrorist bombings killing around 200 people days before the election. At first, the government insisted that a Basque nationalist separatist group, ETA, was responsible, but information leaked out that the bombing actually had the signature of an Al Qaeda attack and that intelligence was pointing in this direction. The Spanish people used the Internet, cell phones and messaging, and other modes of communication to get people out for massive antigovernment demonstrations to condemn the alleged lies of the existing regime concerning the terrorism attacks while also denouncing its support of the Iraq invasion that, in the minds of many, had made Spain an Islamic terrorist target. The spectacle of a lying government, massive numbers of people demonstrating against it, and the use of alternative modes of information and communication developed a spike of support for the anti-government candidate. Millions of young people and others who had never voted went to the polls, and the spectacle emerged of a major political upset. This struck a blow against George W. Bush's Iraq occupation forces when the new Spanish Prime Minister withdrew Spanish forces after spectacles of violence and chaos demonstrated the dangers to Westerners in Iraq, who were seen as an occupying and oppressive force by much of the population.

Around the same time in Taiwan in late March 2004, another bizarre media spectacle erupted in a presidential election. A couple of days before the election, there appeared to be an assassination attempt on the Taiwan president Chen Shui-Bian, who was a vocal supporter of Taiwan independence from China and who had been behind in the polls. After a razor-thin upset victory by Chen, opposition party leaders claimed that he had faked an assassination, alleging that he had claimed before that his opponents had poisoned him in a close election, that he went to a private hospital that had allegedly been prepped to receive him and that would allow him to produce effective pictures of a wound, operation, and medical treatment. Opponents claimed that he had not gone to a public hospital closer to the shooting, a site that would make it more difficult to cover over pictures of a faked assassination.[3]

During the 2004 U.S. presidential election, media spectacle has been a major determinant of the campaign so far. Negative media coverage of the Bush administration during the 9/11 commission hearings, the Abu Ghraib scandal, and daily disasters in Iraq had created negative media images of the Bush administration that the Kerry campaign exploited to maintain a lead in most polls until the period leading up to the Republican convention in August, when Kerry was hit by a wave of negative ads in the Swift Boat Veterans for Bush attacks and the Republican convention that savaged Kerry for an entire week. Kerry regained momentum with what was considered a major victory in the first presidential debate and, as I conclude this study in early October, most polls have the candidates in a statistical dead heat. So far, the momentum of the campaign has been media driven and it remains to be seen if major media spectacles intervene to decisively tip the election one way or another, or if the nitty-gritty work of political organization and efforts to get out the vote will be decisive.

Entertainment has always been a prime field of the spectacle, but in today's infotainment society, entertainment and spectacle have entered into the domains of the economy, politics, society, and everyday life in important new ways. Building on the tradition of spectacle, contemporary forms of entertainment from television to the stage are incorporating spectacle culture into their enterprises, transforming film, television, music, drama, and other domains of culture, as well as producing spectacular forms of culture such as cyberspace, multimedia, and virtual reality.

The Culture of the Spectacle

Sports has long been a domain of the spectacle with events like the Olympics, World Series, Super Bowl, World Cup soccer, and NBA championships attracting massive audiences, while generating sky-high advertising rates. These cultural rituals celebrate society's deepest values (i.e. competition, winning, success, and money), and corporations are willing to pay top dollar to get their products associated with such events. Indeed, it appears that the logic of the commodity spectacle is inexorably permeating professional sports which can no longer be played without the accompaniment of cheerleaders, giant mascots who clown with players and spectators, and raffles, promotions, and contests that feature the products of various sponsors.

Sports stadiums themselves contain screens with electronic reproduction of the action, as well as giant advertisements for various products that rotate for maximum saturation—previewing environmental advertising in which entire urban sites are becoming scenes to boost consumption spectacles. Arenas like the United Center in Chicago, America West Arena in Phoenix, or Enron Field in Houston are named after corporate sponsors. Of course, after major corporate scandals or collapse, like the Enron spectacle, the ballparks must be renamed!

Film has long been a fertile field of the spectacle, with "Hollywood" connoting a world of glamour, publicity, fashion, and excess. Hollywood film has exhibited grand movie palaces, spectacular openings with searchlights and camera-popping paparazzi, glamorous Oscars, and stylish hi-tech film. While epic spectacle became a dominant genre of Hollywood film from early versions of The Ten Commandments through Cleopatra and 2001 in the 1960s, contemporary film has incorporated the mechanics of spectacle into its form, style, and special effects. Films are hyped into spectacle through advertising and trailers which are ever louder, glitzier, and razzle-dazzle. Some of the most popular films of the late 1990s were spectacle films, including Titanic, Star Wars--Phantom Menace, Three Kings, and Austin Powers, a spoof of spectacle, which became one of the most successful films of summer 1999.

The 2000 Academy Awards were dominated by the spectacle Gladiator, a mediocre film whose best picture award and best acting award for Russell Crowe demonstrate the extent to which the logic of the spectacle now dominates Hollywood film. Some of the most critically acclaimed and popular films of 2001 were also hi-tech spectacle, such as Moulin Rouge, a film spectacle that itself is a delirious ode to spectacle, from cabaret and the brothel to can-can dancing, opera, musical comedy, dance, theater, popular music, and film. A postmodern pastiche of popular music styles and hits, the film used songs and music ranging from Madonna and the Beatles to Dolly Parton and Kiss.

In 2002-2004, a series of comic book hero spectacles were among the most popular films. Spiderman (2002) was one of the most popular films ever and has spawned a sequel in 2004. A cycle of films have proliferated, presenting comic book heroes like Hulk, the X-Men series, and the comic book-like Matrix Revisited, Terminator 3, and Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle. Superhero films embody fantasies of attained spectacular powers that enable the protagonists to conquer enemies and prevail in hi-tech environments. These cinematic spectacles are an expression of a culture that generates ever-more fantastic visions as technology and the society of the spectacle continue to evolve in novel and surprising, sometimes frightening, forms.

Television, from its introduction in the 1940s, has been a promoter of consumption spectacle, selling cars, fashion, home appliances, and other commodities along with consumer lifestyles and values. It is also the home of sports spectacle like the Super Bowl or World Series, political spectacles like elections (or, more recently, scandals), entertainment spectacle like the Oscars or Grammies, and its own events like breaking news or special events. Following the logic of spectacle entertainment, contemporary television exhibits more hi-tech glitter, faster and glitzier editing, computer simulations, and with cable and satellite television, a fantastic array of every conceivable type of show and genre.

TV is today a medium of spectacular programs like The X-Files or Buffy, the Vampire Slayer, and spectacles of everyday life such as MTV's The Real World and Road Rules, or the globally popular Survivor and Big Brother series. In 2002-4, there was a proliferation of competitive reality shows in the U.S. involving sex, dating, and marriage including The Bachelor and The Bachelorette, Cupid, and the short-lived Are You Hot? In these shows, men and women humiliate themselves, facing scorn and rejection, as they compete for the favors of sexual competitors and their few moments of media glory and reward. The most popular U.S. reality TV show of 2004, The Apprentice, presented the spectacle of Donald Trump, super capitalist, firing young would-be corporate executives in a harsh Darwinian competition to work for the eccentric and money and power obsessed mogul, The Donald. And Entertainment and spectacle are apotheosized in American Idol, the breakaway hit of summer 2002 that continues to be a TV ratings winner, rewarding young want-to-be entertainers who perform well-known pop songs, while humiliating those judged to be losers.

Theater is a fertile field of the spectacle and contemporary plays have exploited its dramaturgical and musical past to create current attractions for large audiences. Plays like Bring in 'Da Noise, Bring in da Funk, Smokey Joe's Cafe, Fosse, Swing!, and Contact draw on the history of music spectacle, bringing some of the most spectacular moments of the traditions of jazz, funk, blues, swing, country, rock, and other forms of pop entertainment to contemporary thespian audiences. Many of the most popular plays of recent years on a global scale have been spectacles including Les Miserables, Phantom of the Opera, Rent, The Lion King, Mama Mia, La Boheme, and The Producers, a stunningly successful musical spectacle that mocks the Nazis and show business. These theatrical spectacles are often a pastiche of previous literature, opera, film, or theater and reveal the lust for participation in cultural extravaganzas of contemporary audiences for all types of culture.

Fashion is historically a central domain of the spectacle, and today producers and models, as well as the actual products of the industry, constitute an enticing sector of media culture. Fashion designers are celebrities, such as the late Gianni Versace, whose murder by an ex-gay lover in 1997 was a major spectacle of its era. Versace brought together the worlds of fashion, design, rock, entertainment, and royalty in his fashion shows and emporia. When

Yves Saint-Laurent retired in 2002, there was a veritable media frenzy to celebrate his contributions to fashion, which included bringing in the aesthetic and images of modern art and catering to demands of contemporary liberated women as he developed new forms of style and couture.

In fashion today, inherently a consumer spectacle, laser-light shows, top rock and pop music performers, superstar models, and endless hype publicize each new season's offerings, generating highly elaborate and spectacular clothing displays. The consumption spectacle is fundamentally interconnected with fashion that demonstrates what is in and out, hot and cold, in the buzz world of style and vogue. The stars of the entertainment industry become fashion icons and models for imitation and emulation. In a postmodern image culture, style and look become increasingly important modes of identity and presentation of the self in everyday life, and the spectacles of media culture show and tell people how to appear and behave.

Bringing the spectacle into the world of high art, the Guggenheim Museum's Thomas Krens organized a retrospective on Giorgio Armani, the Italian fashion designer. Earlier, Krens produced a Guggenheim show exhibiting motorcycles and plans to open a Guggenheim gallery in the Venetian Resort Hotel Casino in Las Vegas with a seven-story Guggenheim art museum next to it. Not to be outdone, in October 2000, the Los Angeles County Art Museum opened its largest show in history, a megaspectacle "Made in California: Art, Image and identity, 1900-2000," featuring multimedia exhibitions of everything from canonical California painting and photography to Jefferson Airplane album covers, surf boards, and a 1998 Playboy magazine with "The Babes of Baywatch" on its cover. In 2001, the Los Angeles County Art Museum announced that it would become a major spectacle itself, provisionally accepting a design by Rem Koolhaas that would create a spectacular new architectural cover for the museum complex. As described by the Los Angeles Times architectural critic, the "design is a temple for a mobile, post-industrial age…. Capped by an organic, tent-like roof, its monumental form will serve as both a vibrant public forum and a spectacular place to view art" (Dec. 7, 2001: F1).

Contemporary architecture too is ruled by the logic of the spectacle and critics have noticed how art museums are coming to trump the art collection by making the building and setting more spectacular than the collections. [4] The Frank Gehry Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, the Richard Meier Getty Center in Los Angeles, the retrofitted power plant that became the Tate Modern in London, Tadao Ando's Pulitzer Foundation building in Saint Louis, and Frank Gehry's Disney Music Hall in Los Angeles all provide superspectacle environments to display their art works and museum fare. Major architectural projects for corporations and cities often provide postmodern spectacle whereby the glass and steel structures of high modernism are replaced by buildings and spaces adorned with signs of the consumer society and complex structures that attest to the growing power of commerce and technocapitalism.

Popular music is also colonized by the spectacle with music-video television (MTV) becoming a major purveyor of music, bringing spectacle into the core of musical production and distribution. Madonna and Michael Jackson would have never become global superstars of popular music without the spectacular production values of their music videos and concert extravaganzas. Both also performed their lives as media spectacle, generating maximum publicity and attention (not always positive!). Michael Jackson attracted attention in 2001 in a TV spectacle where he reportedly paid hundreds of thousands of dollars to digitally redo the concert footage he appeared in. Jackson had his images retooled so that he would be free of sweat and appear darker than the "real" image, in order to better blend in with his family members performing with him and to appear a cooler black who would appeal to his fans. And one cannot fully grasp the Madonna phenomenon without analyzing her marketing and publicity strategies, her exploitation of spectacle, and her ability to make herself a celebrity spectacle of the highest order (Kellner 1995).

Musical concert extravaganzas are more and more spectacular (and expensive!) and younger female pop music stars and groups such as Mariah Carey, Britney Spears, Jennifer Lopez, or Destiny's Child deploy the tools of the glamour industry and media spectacle to make themselves spectacular icons of fashion, beauty, style, and sexuality, as well as purveyors of music. Pop male singers like Ricky Martin could double as fashion models and male groups like 'N Sync use hi-tech stage shows, music videos, and PR to sell their wares. Moreover, hip-hop culture has cultivated a whole range of spectacle, ranging from musical extravaganzas, to lifestyle cultivation, to real life crime wars among its stars.

Eroticism has frequently permeated the spectacles of Western culture, and is prominently on display in Hollywood film, as well as popular forms such as burlesque, vaudeville, and pornography. Long a major component of advertising, eroticized sexuality has been used to sell every conceivable product. The spectacle of sex is also one of the staples of media culture, permeating all cultural forms and creating its own genres in pornography, one of

media culture's highest grossing domains. In the culture of the spectacle, sex becomes shockingly exotic and diverse, through the media of porno videos, DVDs, and Internet sites that make available everything from teen-animal sex to orgies of the most extravagant sort. Technologies of cultural reproduction such as home video recorders (VCRs) and computers bring sex more readily into the private recesses of the home. And today the sex spectacle attains more and more exotic forms with multimedia and multisensory sex, as envisaged in Huxley's Brave New World, on the horizon.

The spectacle of video and computer games has been a major source of youth entertainment and industry profit. In 2001, the U.S. video game industry hit a record $9 billion in sales and expects to do even better in the next couple of years (Los Angeles Times, Jan. 1, 2002: C1). For decades now, video and computer games have obsessed sectors of youth and provided skills needed for the hi-tech dot.com economy, as well as fighting postmodern war. These games are highly competitive, violent, and provide allegories for life under corporate capitalism and Terror War militarism. In the game Pac-Man, as in the corporate jungle, it's eat or be eaten, just as in air and ground war games it is kill or be killed. Grand Theft Auto 3 and State of Emergency were two of the most popular games in 2002, with the former involving high-speed races through urban jungles and the latter involving political riots and state repression! While some women and game producers have tried to cultivate kinder, gentler, and more intelligent gaming, the best-selling corporate games are spectacles for predatory capitalism and macho militarism and not a more peaceful, playful, and cooperative world.

The examples just provided suggest media spectacle is invading every field of experience from the economy, to culture and everyday life, to politics and war. Moreover, spectacle culture is moving into new domains of cyberspace that will help to generate future multimedia spectacle and networked infotainment societies. My studies of media spectacle strive to contribute to illuminating these developments and to developing a critical theory of the contemporary moment.

Debord and the Spectacle: A Critical Engagement

In using the concept of spectacle, I am obviously indebted to Guy Debord's Society of the Spectacle and the ideas of the Situationist International. Acknowledging the debt, I also note that there are three major differences between my engagement of the concept of the spectacle and Debord's model. First, while Debord develops a rather totalizing and monolithic concept of the society of the spectacle, I engage specific spectacles, like McDonald's and the commodity spectacle, the Clinton sex scandals and impeachment spectacle, or the 9/11 terrorist attacks and Terror War spectacle (Kellner 2003a and 2003b).

I should also acknowledge that I am reading the production, text and effects of various media spectacles from the standpoint of U.S. society, and in an attempt to theorize contemporary U.S. society and culture, and more broadly, globalization and global culture, whereas Debord is analyzing a specific stage of capitalist society, that of the media and consumer society organized around spectacle. Moreover, Debord exhibits a French radical intellectual and neo-Marxian perspective while I have specific class, race, gender, and regional standpoints and deploy a multiperspectivist model, using Frankfurt School critical theory, British cultural studies, French postmodern theory, and many other perspectives (Kellner 1995, 2003a and 2003b).

Secondly, my approach to these specific spectacles is interpretive and interrogatory. That is, I try to interrogate what major media spectacles tell us of contemporary U.S. and global society. For example, what McDonald's tells us about consumption and the consumer society, or globalization; what Michael Jordan and the Nike spectacle tells us about the sports spectacle and the intersection of sports, entertainment, advertising, and commodification in contemporary societies; what the O.J. Simpson affair tells us about race, class, celebrity, the media, sports, gender, the police and legal system and so on in the U.S. and what the obsessive focus on this event for months on end tells us about American media and consumer society.

In my studies of media spectacle, I deploy cultural studies as diagnostic critique, reading and interpreting various spectacles to see what they tell us about the present age, whereas Debord is more interested in a critique of capitalism and presenting revolutionary alternatives. The "popular" often puts on display major emotions, ideas, experiences, and conflicts of the era, as well as indicating what corporations are marketing. A critical cultural studies can thus help decipher dominant trends of the era and contribute to developing critical theories of the contemporary era (Kellner 1995 and 2003a; Best and Kellner 2001).

Thirdly, I analyze the contradictions and reversals of the spectacle, whereas Debord has a triumphant and

hegemonic notion of the society of the spectacle, although he and his comrades sketched out various models of opposition and struggle and in fact inspired in part the rather spectacular May '68 events in France. For an example of the reversal of the spectacle, or at least its contradictions and contestation, take McDonald's. When I began my studies of media spectacle in the 1990s, McDonald's was a figure for a triumphant global capitalism. McDonald's was constantly expanding in the U.S. and globally; its profits were high; and it was taken as a paradigm of a successful American and then global capitalism. George Ritzer's book The McDonaldization of Society (1993, 1996) used McDonald's as a model to analyze contemporary production and consumption, while books like Golden Arches East (Watson et al 1997) valorized McDonald's as bringing modernity itself to vast sectors of the world like Russia and China and McDonald's was praised for its efficient production methods, its cleanliness and orderliness, and its bringing food value and fast, convenient food to the masses.

Suddenly, however, McDonald's became the poster corporation for protest in the anti-corporate globalization movement. The McDonald's corporation had sued some British Greenpeace activists who produced a pamphlet attacking McDonald's unhealthy food, its labor practices, its negative environmental impact, and called for protests and boycotts. McDonald's countered with a lawsuit and an anti-McDonald's campaign emerged with a Web-site McSpotlight that became the most accessed Web site in history; global and local protests emerged; and whenever there was an anticorporate globalization demonstration somewhere, a McDonald's was trashed. Suddenly, therefore, McDonald's expansion was halted, profits were down almost everywhere for the first time, and new McDonald's were blocked by local struggles. Moreover, in the U.S. and elsewhere, there were lawsuits for false advertising, for promoting addictive substances and junk food, and a lot of bad publicity and falling profits that continue to haunt McDonald's through the present.

Finally, I'm aware how Debord's conception of the society of the spectacle trumps my own analysis of the contradictions of the spectacle, their reversal and overturning. A Debordian could argue that despite the vicissitudes of the McDonald's spectacle, the Nike spectacle that involved attack of their labor practices, and other contradictions and contestations of spectacles within contemporary capitalist societies, nonetheless capitalism itself still exists more powerfully than ever, that the media and consumer society continue to reproduce themselves through spectacle, and that a market society thrives upon the vicissitudes of spectacle, and ups and downs of various corporations, personalities, and celebrities.

While this argument is hard to answer in the face of the continued global hegemony of capital, I think it is useful to analyze the contradictions and contestations of media spectacle within specific societies and to counter the notion that media and political spectacles are all-powerful and overwhelming. For instance, I have a study in Media Spectacle of how the U.S. Republican Party attempted to create the spectacle of the Clinton sex scandals and of impeachment backfired and Clinton survived the attempts of the Republicans to remove him from the presidency through negative media politics (Chapter 6).

There are, I believe, several reasons why Clinton survived the spectacle of the sex scandal and impeachment. British cultural studies has long affirmed an active audience that is not totally manipulated by the media and it appears that there is residual respect for the President, or was at the time, and that people did not like and resisted the attacks on President Clinton and the exposure in the national media of his personal and private life. Also, there have been culture wars in the U.S. that had been going on since the 1960s and the Republican impeachment spectacle backfired as many saw it, correctly I think, as a rightwing attack to overthrow an elected president. Hence, when Republicans attacked Clinton, liberals and others saw it as an illicit attempt to use the media to overthrow an elected president and resisted the spectacle and came to Clinton's support.

There were, to be sure, highly contradictory effects from the Clinton spectacles. The Republican assault on the President won sympathy and support for the beleaguered Clinton, but enabled the Republicans to focus attention on the failings of the president. They were also able to block his political agenda, and then to highlight negatives of the Clinton/Gore presidency in the 2000 election that made it difficult for Gore to emphasize the unparalleled peace and prosperity of the past eight years, positives that quickly turned to negatives with the highly destructive and incompetent economic and foreign policy disasters of the Bush administration.

And yet in some ways, the impeachment political spectacle backfired, proving, I would argue, that politics of the spectacle is unpredictable and that spectacles do not always succeed and manipulate the public, and may backfire. Celebrities, too, have experienced the reversal of the spectacle. Michael Jackson famously has had his ups and downs with media spectacle. After becoming one of the most successful media spectacles in history in part due to his spectacular music videos and concert extravaganzas supported by a productive publicity machine, he was accused in

the 1990s of pedophilia and in a 2003 BBC interview that he participated in to help orchestrate a come-back made damning revelations about young boys sleeping at his ranch and was hit shortly thereafter with charges of sexual molestation of a teenage boy, a negative spectacle that could end his career (although the spectacle is unpredictable: while those that prosper from the spectacle can be destroyed by it, rebirth is also always possible in a celebrity spectacle culture).

Although most examples I've given of media spectacle are U.S.-based, and I'm interrogating the examples I know best, many of these spectacles have global impact. Moreover, the spectacle itself is becoming more and more global. For example, in summer 2003 the Harry Potter spectacle is an amazing global literary spectacle, with the best-selling books in history, a series of films, and Pottermania that just keeps expanding. Some years ago, the Princess Diana spectacle was probably the most interrogated event within global cultural studies. In spring and summer of 2003, the deadly SARS disease and fear of a global epidemic was a major spectacle in the global media, especially in the areas affected. And in summer 2003, the David Beckham spectacle became global as Beckham moved from the Manchester United football team to Real Madrid, and that summer there was a film, popular globally, Bend It Like Beckham. During the period, the Beckham and Posh spectacle was on display throughout media culture, featuring Beckman and his celebrity wife Posh, formerly one of the Spice Girls, who is allegedly a fashion maven and publicity hound. The Beckham-Posh affair combines media culture, fashion, sports and the global spectacle, although their spectacle turned tabloid in 2004 as Beckham was accused of having well-documented affairs.

In terms of global spectacle, more distressingly, the Al Qaeda global terrorism spectacle has been dominant, a topic of my book From September 11 to Terror War: The Dangers of the Bush Legacy (Kellner 2003b). The terror spectacle of Fall 2001 revealed that familiar items of everyday life like planes or mail could be transformed into instruments of spectacular terror. The Al Qaeda network hijacking of airplanes turned ordinary instruments of transportation into weapons as they crashed into the World Trade Center Towers and Pentagon on September 11, 2001. Mail became the delivery of disease, terror, and death, as the anthrax scare of Fall and Winter 2001 made ordinary letters threatening items. And rumors spread that the terror network was seeking instruments of mass destruction such as chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons to create spectacles of terror on a hitherto unforeseen scope.

During 2004, the bloody aftermath of the Bush administration invasion and occupation of Iraq produced an increasingly violent and chaotic spectacle that alienated U.S. allies, created numerous enemies, and threatened President Bush's re-election. The televising of 9/11 hearings in spring 2004, accompanied by best-selling books questioning Bush administration terrorism policy and the Iraq war, created negative spectacles of Bush administration bungling, after a period during which Bush received generally positive media presentations in the rush of patriotism after 9/11. The unfolding of the panorama of images of US prisoner abuse of Iraqis and the quest to pin responsibility on the soldiers and higher US military and political authorities that unfolded in May 2004 became one of the most intense media spectacles of contemporary journalism. Evoking universal disgust and repugnance, the images of young American soldiers humiliating Iraqis circulated with satellite-driven speed through broadcasting channels, the Internet, and print media and may stand as some of the most influential images of all time.

While the photos put on display the ubiquity of media spectacle and the powerful impact of images, their digital origins and circulation also require consideration. Upon obtaining over 1,000 digital photos shortly after the initial cycle of images was released by CBS and The New Yorker, the Washington Post commented in a display of photos on May 7, 2004 that while many of the images revealed shocking poses of prisoner abuse, many more were of mundane scenes of daily life in Iraq. Moreover, the digital archive was not the work of professional photojournalists but of young U.S. soldiers. It was as if a generation raised on the media and in possession of digital cameras and camcorders naturally documented its own life, as if one was a participant in a reality TV show or political documentary.

Although there were reports that the images were intended for use to intimidate new Iraqi prisoners and to "soften them up" for interrogation,[5] the pictures also emerged from fascination with taking pictures and the digital documentation of everyday life. They also revealed how quickly such images could leave a foreign country under U.S. military control by way of the Internet and circulate quickly around the world. The Pentagon indicated in the Senate and House Hearings on the Iraq scandal on May 6 that many, many more photos and video were in play and would probably be circulated in the days ahead.

Whereas the U.S. censored every image and word in the pool system concocted for the 1991 Gulf war and had strict guidelines and control mechanisms for the embedded reporters in the 2003 Iraq intervention, the digital age has made it ultimately impossible to hide the dark sides of the current Iraq occupation. The widespread use of digital

cameras and the ease with which images can be shot and disseminated, including direct transmission through wireless connections, demonstrated how media spectacle could trump U.S. military control and circulate highly damaging representations of U.S. abuse of Iraqis. As Donald Rumsfeld exclaimed during the Iraq prisoner abuse hearings on May 7: "people are running around with digital cameras and taking these unbelievable photographs and then passing them off, against the law, to the media, to our surprise, when they had not even arrived in the Pentagon."

The role of media images in warfare and new role of digital spectacle was dramatized further on May 11, 2004 when gruesome imagery of American Nick Berg's beheading was released to the global media. The horrifying shots quickly circulated and made it clear that digital technology was an asymmetric tool of war that any side could use to sway public opinion and to confront the awful horrors of war. It was also becoming clear that Bush's Iraq intervention was a Horror Show that would continue to shock and awe global audiences in the foreseeable future.

Yet revelations during the same week that photos of alleged Iraqi prisoner abuse by British soldiers were fakes, and subsequent admission that they were, also reveals the fragile nature of digital imagery, that it can be altered and faked, and that it is hard to differentiate between real images and digital simulacra. Yet the sheer volume and ugliness of the images of US prisoner abuse trumped epistemological reflections upon the image and instead focused attention on the catastrophe of the Iraqi war itself and what it was doing to both the Iraqis and U.S. occupation forces. Deeply rooted racism stands behind and fuels the Iraqi prisoner abuse as soldiers and the U.S. public have widely viewed Iraqis and Arabs as less than human since the Gulf war of 1991. Arabs and Iraqis have been villains of countless Hollywood films and US TV shows, while racism toward all Arabs and Moslems intensified after the 9/11 attacks. In the first Gulf war, US soldiers went on a "turkey shoot," slaughtering hundreds of Iraqis escaping from Kuwait City near the end of the war. During the current Iraq war, U.S. snipers talk of "rats nests" of Iraqi troops and cheer when they take out the "vermin." U.S. architect for the failed Iraq invasion, Paul Wolfowitz, speaks of "snakes" and "draining the swamps" in "uncivilized parts of the world."

Such racist and dehumanizing perceptions facilitate reducing Iraqi prisoners to animals and less-than-human brutes as when the now notorious woman MP Lyndee English tied a leash around a naked Iraqi prisoner as if he was a dog, or U.S. soldiers perversely constructed stacks of naked Iraqi bodies into sexually humiliating positions as if they were a horde of animals. The image of Lyndee England pointing to an Iraqi male prisoner masturbating with one thumb up and another pointing to the Iraqi's genitals, accompanied by a grotesque leer, again points to the pornographic nature of the prisoner abuse. In another shocking image, a hooded Iraqi prisoner standing atop a box has his arms stretched out and wires attached to his fingers connected to electrical lines. The hood evokes the Ku Klux Klan and their notorious lynching, while the pose of the Iraqi with his arms spread out evokes Christ on the cross, and the monstrous and grotesque figure as a whole reminds art-sensitive viewers of Goya's sketches of the horrors of war.

Only a deeply racist mentality could imagine and engage in such attacks that put on display an unmastered racist brutality that wars seem to unfold. The pictures also elicit a brutal colonial mentality. The Washington Post noted that the cache of more than 1000 digital pictures revealed that the young troops took pictures of camels, exotic vistas of Iraq, and scenes of ordinary people, as well as the copious prisoner abuse and disgusting prison pictures. Many of the quasi-pornographic images released of the Iraqi male prisoners depicted a feminization of them, naked or in women's undergarments, and passively humiliated and emasculated. There is, of course, a long tradition of taking exotic pictures of faraway places, just as there is a tradition of documenting bloody atrocity scenes in wartime. In a digital age, these genres and impulses merged together, producing a panorama of horror that may end military careers and deflate American imperial ambitions in the Middle East for a generation.

To be sure, the pornographic overtones and participation by men and women along with the gloating and smirking faces of the US prison guards made the particular Abu Ghraib prison images especially toxic and explosive. Yet any number of other images of dead Iraqi civilians, U.S. bombing errors, brutal treatment by the U.S. forces of Iraqis, and the like could be easily documented and distributed through the world media. Part of the shock and distress of the images resulted from the sanitized view of the Iraq intervention in the U.S. corporate media. Wars are often defined in the public mind by negative images of atrocity, such as the naked young girl fleeing in Vietnam, with her body scarred by napalm, or the image of a young U.S. soldier lighting a peasant hut on fire with his cigarette lighter. Iraq, too, may be remembered by horrific images, in this case taken by the US troops themselves.

So far, it has been largely Arab media which have focused upon the unsavory aspects of the U.S. Iraq invasion and occupation, showing many bloody images of Iraqi civilian victims of U.S. military action and unflattering images of U.S. military forces and politicians. With the Pandora's Box of Iraqi Evils now opened, with the media's tendency

toward pack journalism and the feeding frenzy of the moment, and with genuine fear and concerns about the direction of the Bush administration's Iraq invasion and occupation among broad segments of the public, there are certain to be many more disturbing images of the growing global media spectacle of U.S. misadventures in Iraq and outrage concerning the entire failed enterprise.

In a media age, images are impossible to control and a media spectacle concocted to be a triumphal display of U.S. military power can easily reverse into a spectacle of U.S. arrogance, brutality, and malfeasance. Yet if the images display the errors of US policy and can be used globally to demonstrate the abuse and torture of prisoners, and if they eventually force the U.S. to reverse its disastrous Iraq policies, they will prove to be examples of media images that changed the world.

Moreover, their widespread distribution and the impassioned debate around them could send the message that abuse and torture of prisoners is unacceptable, thus forcing governments and the military to cease and desist with actions that many people see as a violation of human rights and form of barbaric atavism. The impact of media spectacles are highly unpredictable and it is possible that the distressing circulation of images of Iraqi prisoner abuse could eventually have lasting, positive effects on international law and the treatment of prisoners.

Globalization, Technological Revolution, and the Restructuring of Capitalism

Thus, media spectacle is always contradictory, ambiguous, and subject to reversal and flip-flops so that a political administration, corporations, and celebrities can never be sure if they will be beneficiaries or victims of the vagaries of spectacle. Behind the genesis and ascendancy of the expansion of media spectacle, the proliferating virtual spectacle of cyberspace, and an emerging virtual reality (VR) are the twin phenomena of the global restructuring of capitalism and technological revolution with the explosion of new forms of media and communication technology, computer and information technology, and, on the horizon, biotechnology. In earlier writings, I introduced a concept of technocapitalism to describe a configuration of capitalist society in which technical and scientific knowledge, computerization and automation of labor, and intelligent technology play a role in the process of production analogous to the function of human labor power, mechanization of the labor process, and machines in an earlier era of capitalism (Kellner 1989). The technological revolution and global restructuring of capital continue to generate new modes of societal organization, polity, sovereignty, forms of culture and everyday life, and types of contestation.

Thus, as developing countries move into the new millennium, its inhabitants, and others throughout the globe, find themselves in an ever-proliferating infotainment society, a globally networked economy, and an Internet technoculture. Contemporary theorists find themselves in a situation parallel to the Frankfurt School in the 1930s that theorized the emergent configurations of economy, polity, society and culture brought about by the transition from market to state monopoly capitalism. In their now classical texts, the Frankfurt School theorists analyzed the novel forms of social and economic organization, technology, and culture, including the rise of giant corporations and cartels and the capitalist state in "organized capitalism," in both its fascist or "democratic" state capitalist forms. They also engaged the culture industries and mass culture that served as new types of social control, novel forms of ideology and domination, and a potent configuration of culture and everyday life (Kellner 1989).

In terms of political economy, the emerging postindustrial form of technocapitalism is characterized by a decline of the state and increased power of the market, accompanied by the growing strength of globalized transnational corporations and governmental bodies and decreased force of the nation-state and its institutions. To paraphrase Max Horkheimer, whoever wants to talk about capitalism, must talk about globalization, and it is impossible to theorize globalization without talking about the restructuring of capitalism.

Globalization involves the flow of goods, information, culture and entertainment, people, and capital across an increasingly networked economy, society, and culture (see the documentation in Castells 1996, 1997, and 1998). Like the Internet, globalization is a complex phenomenon which involves positive and negative features, costs and benefits, an up and down side, and deep ambiguities and unintended consequences. Yet, like theories of information and communication technologies, most theories of globalization are either primarily negative, seeing it as a disaster for the human species, or as positive, bringing new products, ideas, and wealth to a global arena. As with technology, I propose a critical theory of globalization that would dialectically appraise its positive and negative features, its contradictions and ambiguities, that is sharply critical of its negative effects, skeptical of legitimating ideological discourse, but that also recognizes the centrality of the phenomenon in the present and that affirms and develops its

positive features (see Best and Kellner 2001 and Kellner 2002).

To conclude: developing countries and the globalized world is emerging into a culture of media spectacle that constitutes a novel configuration of economy, society, politics, and everyday life. It involves new cultural forms, social relations, and modes of experience. It is producing an ever-expanding spectacle culture with its proliferating multimedia and interactive spectacles that are intensifying and expanding as wireless technologies develop. Critical social theory thus faces compelling challenges in theoretically mapping and analyzing these emergent forms of culture and society and the ways that they may contain novel forms of domination and oppression as well as potential for democratization and social justice.

Endnotes

1. Debord's Society of the Spectacle (1967) was published in translation in a pirate edition by Black and Red (Detroit) in 1970 and reprinted many times; another edition appeared in 1983 and a new translation in 1994. Thus, in the following discussion, I cite references to the numbered paragraphs of Debord's text to make it easier for those with different editions to follow my reading. The key texts of the Situationists and many interesting commentaries are found on various Web sites, producing a curious afterlife for Situationist ideas and practices. For further discussion of the Situationists, see Best and Kellner 1997, Chapter 3; see also the discussions of spectacle culture in Best and Kellner 2001 and my book Media Spectacle (Kellner 2003a), upon which I draw in this article.

2. See the charts on media mergers and concentration in Croteau and Hoynes 2001: 75ff. and in The Nation (Jan. 7, 2002) with analysis by Mark Crispin Miller, "What's Wrong with This Picture?"

3. Throughout April 2004, there continued to be oppositional party demonstrations against the Chen Taiwan nationalist party and demands for an election recount and investigation of whether Chen staged his assassination; international experts, including Henry Lee who attained national fame in the O.J. Simpson trial, were investigating the assassination attempt; see David Pierson, "Forensic Expert Hounded for News,"

Los Angeles Times, April 190, 2004: B01. According to one report: "Even though Lee confirmed that both suffered from gunshot wounds, he pointed out the shooting was not a political assassination." See "Lien calls for merger of opposition parties," The China Post (June 13, 2004: 14). But Chen again formed a nationalist party (DPP) government, although there were challenges in the court.

4. See Nicholai Ouroussoff, "Art for Architecture's Sake," Los Angeles Times (March 31, 2002). I might note that economic downturn in the U.S. in 2003 forced postponement of the expansion of the Los Angeles County Art Museum and other spectacular architectural projects.

5. This was indeed the defense that the soldiers who took the pictures gave, claiming that they were ordered by superiors to take the photos; see, for example, Terence Neilan, "7 Charges Filed Against a Central Figure in Iraq Prison Abuse," New York Times (May 14, 2004). Subsequent stories revealed, however, that orders that enabled the systematic prisoner abuse in Iraq came from the top of the Pentagon and Bush administration; see Seymour Hersh, "The Grey Zone," The New Yorker, posted May 15, 2004 at http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?040524fa_fact and John Barry, Michael Hirsh and Michael Isikoff, "The Roots of Torture," Newsweek, May 24, 2004.

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E-Mail: Connections, Contexts, and Another Space

Terry Caesar

Everyone knows a story of someone who pressed the "send" key too soon, and thereby (blush) unintentionally transmitted a personal e-mail response to a list or a listserv rather than an individual. Two theses about e-mail: it remains too fast a technology of communication and it continually confounds the boundary between the categories of the public and the private. On the other hand, though, everyone who e-mails knows how a particularly important or urgent message often must be supplemented by a phone call. Two more theses about e-mail: it does not communicate fast enough, and it remains well to the private side of the divide between public and private technologies of communication.

So it goes about the technology. There seems to be too much to claim about such a vast, intricate phenomenon, even its contradictions. The world has been defined as more than the sum of everything that could be said about it. E-mail today is very much like the world (as well as now constituting one definition of the world, around which is being woven, according to William Mitchell, an increasingly dense, multilayered cocoon of antennas, network access points, relay points, and channels [Mitchell 2003: 55]). It is not easy to extricate e-mail—including listservs, discussion groups, and chat rooms as well as one-to-one communication—from this world. Furthermore, any single e-practice is finally inseparable, if only technically, from the entire aggregate of the Internet. It is not that there is too much e-mail. It is that "e-mail" stands for too much.

For example, Ben Agger mentions an "Internet billionaire" who returned from a recent trip to have 2,230 e-mails awaiting him. He proceeds to wonder about what exactly an adequate model of reading (not to say writing) could be before such a number (Agger 2004: 113-14). And yet there are undoubtedly thousands or even millions of people who count themselves fortunate to receive one e-mail message on any given day, according to the old sentimental model of a letter in the mailbox. One world can comprehend both groups of people. (As well, the continual slippage or transformation of e-mail into mail delivered by the post office.) But can one practice/comprehend both? Or rather, one technology—to Mitchell, ultimately comprehending everything from prenatal imaging to posthumous digital traces—which enables a multiplicity of practices?

One explanatory strategy: simply convert the technology into the multiplicity. Hence, Agger, for example, speaking of the proliferation of "self" prefixes: "More than ever, we need to attend to self-assemblage, the ways in which people electronically create themselves in the figural, flickering, spectral world of the Internet" (Agger 2004: 119). E-mail, in other words, is at once nothing less than one of those ways and nothing more than a convertible term into the sum of all of those ways. Maybe so. My own argument, however, will question the larger terms though which virtual selfhood is made manifest through e-mail, which I will take to represent the best, most explicit manifestation of "the continuous and irrepressible presence of subjective movements" within the Internet.

I take this last phrasing from Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, who are not at this moment specifically discussing the Internet but instead the "non-place" of power, "the site where the hybrid control functions of Empire" is exercised (Hardt and Negri 2000: 319). E-mail represents to them a signal instance of this site, whose spatial as well as temporal displacements constitute one especially preeminent way in which power is at once constituted by "sovereignty" as well as expressed by each individual as "subjective. " On the latter point, Mitchell gives precisely the

right note: "I am part of the networks, and the networks are part of me. I show up in the directories. I am visible to Google. I link, therefore I am" (Mitchell 2003: 62). You have to be part of the networks in order to e-mail while at the same time they have to be part of you. But you do not have to be so sanguine about it and you may even be skeptical of such happy reciprocity.

Hardt and Negri go on to speak of "today's imperial constitution" as conceivable "in the form of a rhizomatic and universal communication network in which relations are established to and from all its points or nodes. " On the one hand, they continue, "the network formally allows all possible subjects in a web of relations to be present simultaneously, but on the other hand, the network itself is a real and proper non-place" (Hardt and Negri 2000: 319-20). Where Mitchell cavorts in this non-place site of miniaturized, digitalized, dematerialized, delocalized connectivity Hardt and Negri merely conclude that its constitution must be a contested site. My own argument will be to try to restore something of the terms of the contest, through focusing on e-mail as a subjective movement of a particular kind, coalescing around three areas: community, body, and code.

In order to understand both our bodies and our various networks, " [w]e will do better, " Mitchell states at one point, "to take the unit of subjectivity, and of survival, to be the biological individual plus its extensions and interconnections" (Mitchell 2003: 39). E-mail is of course e-mail, in one respect, because it constitutes an acting-out of this proposition; no one emails as it were biologically. And yet no one survives electronically in a non-place. In the following discussion, I will strive to restore materiality to this place, which functions as if successful access to its potential connections ultimately represents all that need be said about it.

It does not. Once electronically connected, links are not only gained. Other links are left behind, neglected, or ignored. The subjective moment of e-mail is won at some cost, for through it society suffers its own displacement, the body its own alienation, and individual identity its own rewriting according to code. These consequences are not to be wholly lamented. As a medium for interaction and transaction, e-mail is a remarkable fact, which has changed the range, the ease, and even the very nature of human communication. Just because it is so remarkable, though, it needs to be subjected to a more strenuous critique. What is the status of the subjective in electronic communications? Where is it located? What remain its constraints? Finally, what are its protocols? These are the questions which I want to explore, partly in personal terms they require.

Community

One day while teaching in Japan I was surfing the Internet. I chanced upon a site that mentioned a conference in Asia on language. To my surprise, the conference included a paper by a woman who shared my family name. Even more surprising, she taught in South Korea! Could she be a relative? I have hardly met anyone in my whole life named "Caesar. " So, what the hell, I decided to e-mail the woman and ask her if by some chance we could be related. Perhaps it would not have mattered where she lived, although on this occasion our geographic proximity did seem to persuade me even more to write. The conference site gave her e-mail address.

The woman was outraged to reply. Who was I, exactly? How did I get her address? Shocked, I tried to explain once more who I was, and how I got gotten her address from a public space, available to anyone who logged on to the Internet. The woman responded quickly. She did not know who I was, but she was sure of one thing: I was harassing her. She demanded that I cease at once trying to communicate. This time I was more amazed than shocked. Didn't the woman know anything about e-mail? Immediate contact, more oral than written, heedless of context, and so on? How was this possible not to understand that e-mail is different?

But of course such a reaction not only remains possible but is in fact positively constitutive of e-mail community. Through e-mail, contact can now be made between or among any number of individuals on earth, at least technically. Yet this does not make them a "community, " not even when we attempt in each case to unpack the circumstances (professional in my above case) that enable the contact in the first place. First, the contact is fraught with assumptions and conventions, just as all contacts are. Discussions of e-mail often ignore these, as if the technology either takes care of assumptions all of itself or else comes with a tacit agreement to set conventions aside in the interests of efficiency and the sheer wonder of connectivity.

Evelyn Nien-ming Ch'ien, for example, compares the community formation of the Internet to periodicals, by means of a common energizing of the vernacular, only more so. "Language also functions differently on the Internet; it is more active and alive, since users can be instant text-messaging or emailing a response quickly" (Ch'ien

2004: 284). She goes on to note that formal language and even grammar can be dispensed with and how "e-language cultures do not encourage monoglot reading publics; they encourage linguistic individualism" (Ch'ien 2004: 286). Therefore, Internet exchanges are more like conversations and "Internet community is more tangible and effable" (Ch'ien 2004: 286). Never once does Ch'ien question whether in fact the technology fosters a kind of contact, not to say community, so facile as to be ephemeral.

Not all e-contact fosters community, although arguably most communication happens in the first place within some larger enabling conditions, on the model of a professional specialization (Linguistics, String Theory, Legal Studies) or a special interest group (dog breeds, movie stars, computer games). In fact, one could easily argue that even discussion groups do not constitute "communities" in a very searching or comprehensive way, since members are free to leave at any time (technical instructions on how to do so are as important as instructions about how to join) and all abide under conditions of such constraint (if only because of the danger of "flame wars") that community boundaries are scarcely tested, much less explored. Common interests, in other words, are not at all the same thing as common values; interests are purely cognitive in nature, and do not claim to govern actions either as determinatively or cohesively as values.

Take the instance of humor. One distinct, significant function of e-mail continues to be the dissemination of humorB-anecdotes, stories lifted from public media, jokes. To whom? Virtually anybody. It is so easy through e-mail to copy a joke and send it to a few like-minded people as well as one's usual correspondents, that often one forgets the joke a few minutes after hitting "send." (Or else eventually receives the joke back, through the same spontaneous, scattershot logic by which it was transmitted.) Why send the joke at all? In a sense, to gesture to, if not create, an instant "community" of people who take some pleasure in the humor, as well as perhaps in themselves being so constituted, however ephemerally.

Yet, although of course the communication of a joke can consolidate an already-established (or wired) group of people, the transmission alone creates no more than the fantasy of a community. Much e-mail abets this fantasy. A commonly agreed-upon narrative of "community" persists—under whose auspices connectivity proceeds—borrowed from the social world away from the computer screen and the keyboard. On the contrary, though, connectivity no more necessarily leads to community than the mere fact of communication does. A better analogy for e-community has to do with the transitory one created by jokes rather than the more fixed one based upon the manifold subjects of discussion groups.

And a better way of understanding the function of any sort of "community" in e-discourse is to claim that it is so constituted on the basis of a single rationale: escape from actual communities in three-dimensional space and real time. In fact, e-mail abides as an important way of recuperating what actual communities lack: sympathetic others, entertainment opportunities, stimulating conversation. It also continues as a significant way of transposing the energies of the workplace, and therefore increasingly businesses attempt to restrict e-activity by making all communication official, and frequently having a disclaimer tag on each message posted by the server, to the effect that content is privileged, confidential, and may not be misused.

The remorselessly private register of such a tag contrasts with the happily public character of e-mail technology. (Or its celebrants—for example, James Barksdale: "Open Internet softwear will change the whole communications paradigm. Organizations will tear down walls and have common Internet infrastructure running across all their systems" [Barksdale 1998: 98]. But what about erecting walls against private use?) In fact, the technology's very technical constituents have nothing "privileged" about them; all e-mail either can be retrieved from a computer's hard drive or be read via a server. Furthermore, e-mail can always be copied; its confidentiality is in this respect inherently unstable.

Finally, the fact that it can be "misused" perhaps comprises one of the primary pleasures of e-mail, whether receiving something originally sent to someone else, cutting and pasting from one message into a new one, or just emailing from work anyway, restrictions be damned. From the attempts of so many businesses, corporations, and institutions to restrict e-mail activity, we can understand two things about it. First, the notion of "community" it fosters cannot easily be willed into existence and restricted in scope. Indeed, there is something unregenerately private about e-mail, or at least heedless of official discursive regimes. Ch'ien is right about the linguistic individualism of e-language cultures. They take their values from the conditions of e-production—a sole individual, on line, rather than the conditions of e-reception—ten, twenty, hundreds or even thousands of others, on the basis of a single post. The values are the values of virtuality itself, which by definition cannot be grounded (or else it would be actual rather than virtual).

Secondly, e-community continually seeks an actual-world supplement that either dissolves strictly discursive virtual bonds or transforms them into the more real, compelling relations of actual space and time. In a discussion of virtual community, after stressing the importance of "absorbing" new procedures and customs of any one, Howard Rheingold concludes with the following disclaimer: "Don't forget that telephones and face-to-face meetings are still appropriate ways to cement and extend the friendships you make on-line" (Rheingold 1998: 121). Undoubtedly this is true. But then the virtual community ceases to be virtual.

Discussions of the peculiar relatedness that e-mail makes possible continually ignore the logic of such disclaimers, as the notion of "community" suffers a slippage into the idea of friendship or the fact of family. "I have found that e-mail has helped me to strengthen relationships with members of my family who do not live near me," writes Barksdale (Barksdale 1998: 99). Again, undoubtedly true for many other people, and representative of one of the many social benefits of e-mail. But the creation of community is not one of them. E-community really resides to one side of the famous sociological distinction between Gemeinschaft and Gessellschaft, in some instances contracting to a condition resembling the intimacy of the one, at other instances expanding to something approximating the impersonality of the other, but in all instances relying on an analogy to the social world that cannot be fully realized in e-terms.

Mitchell would reply that e-terms are simply part of those of the world now, just as the world is part of those terms. "Our circles of interactions and mutual obligation, " he states at one point, "cannot be limited to our campsites, immediate neighborhoods, cities, nation-states, or even networks of international trading partners; they are truly and inescapably global" (Mitchell 2003: 207). Granted. Yet the further one goes from the campsite or immediate neighborhood, the less compelling the interaction is likely to become, and the more obligation is open to chance and whim. E-terms favor access and speed, rather than established patterns or shared grounds. E-mail works best when you want to make a quick contact, heedless of whatever might prevent or inhibit it—questions that have to be carefully negotiated in social life off-line.

So at variance with some realized manifestation of the social can e-terms be, in fact, that, in my own above case, they return even in an attempt to ignore them, for the worthy purpose (or so I thought) of trying to confirm a family member. (With some irony, I came away from the encounter convinced that my erstwhile family member would not even make a good e-mail correspondent.) Another example from my experience. A couple of years ago I read a letter in a professional journal from a man with whom I had once participated in a postdoctoral summer seminar. My fondest memories were of the table tennis games we used to play downstairs in a dorm. The man and I had never kept in touch afterwards. No particular reason why.

Enter e-mail. Indeed, a better example of the communicative ease of e-mail could not be imagined. I could just write the man, rather as I would knock on his door. So I did. He replied fondly, with various bits of news to take me across the years. So did his wife. But each wrote in a declarative mode, leaving little space for further exploration or comment. I responded with some words of thanks, feeling sure this would be the end of the contact, and so it was. E-mail suddenly enabled us to get back in touch. But just for a moment, only long enough to activate old feelings but not renew them. Life—to use one hopeless word for all the years between and all manner of circumstances, theirs as well as mine—simply had not favored the continuance of our relation, once the six weeks of that doctoral summer ended. Were we part of a "community" then? Perhaps. But if so, purely in terms of intellectual interests. Were we part of a "community" now? Only in the broad terms of belonging to the same disciplinary discourse.

What is a "community?" E-mail is in place today to provide one crucial determinant for how this question may be answered. But e-mail will not itself positively certify the answer, which instead will either come before some communicative manifestation of the technology or else after it. And once more, e-mail of any sort may well ultimately take place because the whole realm of the social has failed, especially in its ideal character as a community. (Mitchell is typical of those e-celebrants who proceed to recreate this character, without remarking on the failure, with such statements as the following: "The constants of my world are no longer provided by contiguous home turf; increasingly, my sense of continuity and belonging derives from being electronically networked to the widely scattered people and places I care about" [Mitchell 2003: 17].) Take a recent popular narrative of a utopian dreaming, Alex Garland's novel, The Beach (1998). At the end of the movie version, when the hero, Richard, is back in Bangkok, his island paradise gone, we last see him at a computer (in the novel it is a "word processor"), looking for a connection.

Body

Question: where is the Internet at airports? Even in these cellular days, there are plenty of available "standing" telephones. But not many computer terminals. At the present time, a few of the priciest airlines for the longest flights (New York to Hong Kong or San Francisco to Singapore) do provide both First and Business class with e-mail, for a fee. Otherwise, nothing, although apparently airlines can outfit seats with laptop power outlets and PC data connections that provide roaming access to e-mail. Of course, broadband is coming, and soon. Meanwhile, why the delay to date, especially when personal seatback TV screens and live satellite 24-channel feeds (not to mention computer games and air phones) are becoming increasingly common? The answer may be a simple one: at airports and even in the air, e-mail becomes redundant.

Why do we e-mail? Because we are not there to communicate in person. The fact that we will be physically present, soon, explains, I believe, much of the reluctance of airlines to commit themselves to e-mail, which is presumed to function on the model of a telephone. Why call when you're going to be there? (Except to say you're on your way.) Just so, why e-mail, which is further presumed to function on the alternative model of a letter, which is only written when the correspondents are absent from each other? Why e-mail, when the word will shortly be made flesh? No need to choose between the difference between these two models, any more than there is between the difference within e-mail itself between its similarity to oral communication and to written communication.

To airlines, it is as if each similarity is true—and both models argue for the superfluousness of the technology, since each assumes communication either as a distant bodily relation or a completely absent one. The logic of the air travel, on the other hand, is wholly physical; the body will be transported through space, thereby bridging distance and relocating presence. A form of communication that effectively abstracts the body from space (and voids time) disturbs this logic. At least from the point of view of communication, better to dissolve the difference between "here" and "there" in a single keystroke, and effectively to do away with the cumbersomeness of the body completely. If this sort of rationale is disturbing to some—because the body loses its very privilege in space and time—it is exciting to others. There are lots of virtual ways of "having" a body, or rather of expressing one, now. As the airline industry begins to look for ways to incorporate them, it continues to be burdened by the fact that in the age of the Internet air travel is too slow.

There is a well-known New Yorker cartoon showing two dogs at respective computer terminals. One is delightedly saying to the other: "On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog. " (Reprinted in Mitchell 1995: 6.) The joke is not merely that any identity is virtual, fake, possible. It is also that no body at all is necessary. In comparison to e-mail, previous communication technologies conveyed at least a physical trace—a hand, a voice. The typeface on the computer screen conveys none. Any body can write e-mail, disembodied. To this day, there are occasional stories of fifteen year-old girls who turn out to be forty year-old men, or vice versa, once the realm of the physical world is somehow re-entered, inexorably, from the realm of e-chat rooms. Is the on-line the moment when nobody knows who you are finally inseparable from the moment when somebody finds out who you are—and you want them to find out?

Of course, e-communication need not be so disembodied. Witness pornography, which some have maintained is equivalent to the Internet itself. On a more personal basis, the attachment of digital photographs or audio and video clips to e-mail restores the missing physical world, no less than subsequent telephone calls or meetings. The Internet, Agger writes, "opens up a new world of self-creation, storytelling, global communities, interactive instantaneity, and possibly even political organizing quite unknown in a slower-paced stage of modernity" (Agger 2004: 146). Quite true. But the Internet also opens up ways for a slower pace to re-absorb it, and re-ground the sheer provocation of nobody knowing who you are back to the constraints of everybody knowing because you abide in one place, at one time, and in one body.

Slavoj Zizek has an interesting argument about cyberspace. Countering those who maintain that we should never forget our bodies—the ultimate horizon of our existence, the foundation underlying our immersion in all possible virtual universes—he finds that "in cyberspace, we return to the bodily immediacy, but to an uncanny, virtual immediacy" (Zizek 2001: 54). Of what does it consist? "We learn that there never was" such a body—our bodily self-experience was always-already that of an imaginary constituted entity" (Zizek 2001: 55, his emphasis). Although Zizek does not say so, we could further speculate that it is precisely this fact that enables the place [ment] of the body in e-mail, at once an entity and the imaginary constitution of one, depending on the occasion.

Are most occasions still on a person-to-person scale? If so, to what extent does this scale appropriate the

relation of bodily immediacy? After all, a short personal e-mail message may use cyberspace but scarcely inhabits it. On the other hand, if the communication is less personal (of an official nature, say, or to a whole group), to what extent does a larger scale necessarily either dispense with a bodily relation or else recreate it in a more imaginary fashion? Perhaps these are hapless, impossible questions. Never mind the conditions of individual e-mail in any particular instance. Consider merely the circumstances of the technology. Take Skype. As I write, Skype is the name of the most popular application of voice-over Internet protocol, a free software program which enables any two people (or conference callers up to five) to employ their computers to talk to each other.

Thereby, the computer becomes a telephone, e-mail once more makes available the body, and the virtual dimension of the Internet becomes actual. " Are we not more and more monads with no direct windows onto reality, " Zizek asks, " interacting alone with the PC screen, encountering only other virtual simulcra, and yet immersed more than ever in the global network, synchronously communicating with the entire globe" (Zizek 2001: 52). Well, not with Skype, or at least not in the same way as we are with Yahoo or Hotmail. While running, Skype literally appears on the computer screen in the form of a little window. The only ostensible thing that connects it to e-mail at all is that file transfers and instant text messages are allowed during each voice session.

Does Skype represent the e-future, enabling the body to suffer its fateful alienation (if we grant Žižek's argument) with more immediacy, if not illusions? Or is the future better represented by the situation of a man profiled in a recent New Yorker? He works in southern India and trains outsourced workers in computer use (requiring ever-new macros, databases, quality-control systems, information systems) for an American company. " Already, " he says at one point, " we are half of the time in New York, just our bodies are left behind" (Boo 2004: 65). The man has some regret. But he lives in the globalized future, where one day there will be neither religious bigotry nor a caste system but, it seems, time. " Soon we will really share only one time zone—or, really, there will be no time at all. "

Did somebody say alienation? Its constitutive fact on-line is one thing; e-mail remains nothing if not basically a system of deferred interaction, or else why not make it real-time, if you can? And yet there are ranges or degrees of on-line alienation—some so wide and all-encompassing as to transpose alienation into severance of the body from its whole life-world. Donald Lowe is undoubtedly correct: " We can never know the actual lived body in the world" (Lowe 1995: 5). Yet a body whose reality does not intersect with language, body practices, and the social (Lowe's own particular favored coordinates) would not be a body in any sense we could recognize.

Much of the continued provocation of e-mail is that it does eradicate time. With good reason, Mitchell exclaims over wireless time as comprising " the electronic present continuous" (Mitchell 2003: 104). But the prospect would not be nearly so seductive in the first place if we did not abide in our own respective moments of time, continuous with our physical existence itself. Moreover, a technology, no matter how disembodied—or rather disembodying—that does not suffer a fall back into the temporal, conditional realm of the lived body would not be worth the provocation that e-mail continues to possess. The provocation is profound. " What if we could go all the way with shaking ourselves loose, " wonders Mitchell, shuck the last few atoms from our souls, and simply live on server farms somewhere" (Mitchell 2003: 167)? But the fall is no less decisive.

Mitchell himself fudges the issue, musing that the " server crash" of " mortality" need not be somehow implemented, since " by other means" (surgical procedures, all manner of downloading dematerialized information) we " are already asymptotically approaching that networked cyborg state" (Mitchell 2003: 168). In a real sense, Žižek's body-that-never-was reappears as Mitchell's cyborg body that now—from the time Neanderthal man picked up sticks and stone— at last is. But in an equally real sense, these bodies are hopelessly abstract. In particular, the body that e-mails rebukes them because it is fated to live out in actual social terms the circumstances that give rise to a fantasy of pure networking (Mitchell elsewhere refers to its access as " all very Platonic" [Mitchell 2003: 142]) in the first place. In order to illustrate how what we have at present are both the circumstances and the fantasy, let me relate a final story.

A friend once taught at the branch campus of a large Pennsylvania state university. She also belonged to a Latina feminist listserv. Issues of mutual interest were regularly discussed, along with professional news, conference notes, and so on. One day a member of the listserv became unusually belligerent. My friend was startled. It seemed everyone in the group suddenly become unsettled. She decided to write to the member, directly, offlist, and ask her to calm down. When she did so, she got an abusive response. Another attempt to mediate, still offlist, brought another belligerent reply. It seemed the woman (who now revealed herself for the first time as a lesbian

as well as a Hispanic) accused my friend of "insulting me and my people. "

She made a final reply to the woman, wishing her and her people good luck, and declaring that she would no longer answer any of her messages. Result? The woman posted something of the off-list words to the listserv and at the same time sent copies of all of the personal correspondence to the dean of my friend's branch campus. To the dean, she demanded satisfaction for being insulted, since, after all, the university owned the server and therefore was ultimately responsible for its e-content. Rather than ignore the woman, the dean seized the opportunity to challenge my friend, who was in fact a critic of hers. The dean wrote an e-mail, mentioning the abusive woman's communication, and demanding to know if my friend was " for diversity. "

The technology " creates community? " In this instance it shattered its own and erupted destructively into another. The Internet sponsors a " decentered" self? Here, it was remorselessly centered, and poised to attack the selfhood of another. E-mail alienates the body? It depends not only on how the body is imagined but who gets to define its circumstances. Discussions of e-mail, it seems to me, routinely define the e-body from the position of [solitary] production. But it could just as easily be defined from the position of [collective] reception, where the body becomes inescapably less " virtual. " Such was the case here. My friend was shocked to see how quickly e-mail could loop from personal to social and back again, or how manifestly words could be suddenly made manifest in, or rather on, a body.

Finally, the body was hers. The dean's initial e-mail was, to her, the last in a long, intricate sequence of personal challenges, inequities, and insults. "Diversity?" It may be happier when it is virtual (and therefore discursive). Indeed, perhaps one reason it got to be so desirable is because the technology exists to keep it virtual—full of electric energy that can be transmitted on-line rather than material conditions that must be established off-line. What my friend did is to treat her administration's acceptance of the absurd accuser as equivalent to being disowned. So she resigned. And she resigned in a manner that provides a sort of coda to this story, for she did not write a letter of resignation. Instead, she sent the dean a terse e-mail. The dean was almost instantaneously pleased to accept the resignation.

Would this exchange have happened so decisively at an earlier " technological" moment, not so many years ago, when letters would have had to be typed instead of messages posted? Hard to say. Did my friend afterwards regret her resignation, if only because she was able to convey it so fast—arguably, too fast? I do not think so. How fast is too fast, and to whom? Different people, different e-mails, and different relations to their respective bodies. What I would venture is that to resign a position over e-mail would feel to me to lend the technology too much authority, as if it and not me was performing the communication, while I looked on as if abstracted from my own body.

Code

On a recent trip to Brazil and Argentina I was struck by the difference between Internet cafes in each country. In Brazil, the computer terminals seem to be established on the model of video games, while in Argentina they are modeled on the basis of e-mail. Perhaps it was just the accident of the cafes I chanced to use in the respective countries, but in Brazil (primarily in one city, Curitiba), the users seemed mostly quite young, while in Argentina (solely in one city, Buenos Aires) they were much older. In any case, though, the clearest national difference had to do with the available technology itself: in Brazil, the Internet cafes feature computers, exclusively, while in Argentina the cafes include telephone booths.

How to explain this difference? In order to do so, one would have to examine the nature of telecommunications as it has developed in each country, as well as perhaps the national identity of each one (presumably more ludic in Brazil) as it can be recreated in terms of either Internet access or use. But how much does the comparison matter? Certainly not at all to the café user at any one time or space. As Mitchell writes, when he uses his cellphone or the OS on his laptop, " [m]ostly I cannot tell whether [intermediating machine intelligence] is supplied by local devices, by remote servers, or by some combination of the two, and it doesn't matter—as long as there is capacity available somewhere, and the connections are sufficiently fast" (Mitchell 2003: 35).

And yet I believe the very question discloses much about Internet use insofar as e-mail is concerned. For all the discourse of globality, e-mail is not free of local conditions, and for all the fact of wireless connectivity, e-mail is still not free from national configurations. (The attempt by the People's Republic to monitor all servers in China

being the most obvious example.) Moreover, for all the apparent subjective freedom, a system—a server of some sort—must be in pace in order to permit connection in the first place. This does not mean that subjectivity is governed by the conditions of access; even Hardt and Negri agree that because the Internet has no center, it is difficult for communication to be regulated or prohibited (Hardt and Negrl 2000: 299). What does it mean?

It means that all electronic communication is subject to code. In his earlier book, Mitchell defines code thus: "The rules governing any computer-constructed microworld—of a video game, your personal computer desktop, a word processor window, an automated teller machine, or a chat room on the networkare precisely and rigorously defined in the text of the program that constructs it on your screen." Therefore, he continues, we should ask the same questions about this "programmed polity" that Aristotle asked about city-states: "Is it just and humane. Does it protect our privacy, our property and our freedoms? Does it constrain us unnecessarily or does it allow us to act as we may wish" (Mitchell 1995: 111)? Elsewhere, having characterized code as an arcane text, typically accessible by only a few "high priests," he repeats his cautions: "Who shall write the softwear that increasingly structures our daily lives? What shall that softwear allow and proscribe. Who shall be privileged by it and who marginalized? How shall the writers of the rules be answerable" (Mitchell 1995: 112)?

These questions are notably absent in Mitchell's latest volume. In both, code is stated to constitute the law. But in Me++, Mitchell exhibits no desire to interrogate the fact, as he does earlier. What has happened during the intervening eight years? Two developments in particular. First, code has evolved—become more "footloose," more "mobile," and no longer an affair of floppy disks or punch cards. As Mitchell summarizes, "Dematerialized and radically mobilized code has become allied with the memory and computation capability now embedded in gadgets and machines of all kinds and with the increasingly comprehensive networking of these devices" (Mitchell 2003: 90). No wonder the enticing prospect of "the full Foucault treatment" (with respect to the recognition of code's power implicit in the Y2K scare of 1999) is relegated to a footnote, and then handled over to the reader as an "exercise" (Mitchell 2003: 232). By 2003, Mitchell has ceased to believe in the power of such a treatment, which surely motivated his political concerns eight years ago. Today, code is simply "everywhere." Its law is implacable.

The second development directly follows from the first: we have become coded. Code not only takes up residence in our networks, our software programs, our computers. (Destructively in the case of viruses.) Code takes up residence in us—in our bodies, our daily lives, our political choices. We have become inseparable—inconceivable—from our electronic extensions. In a real sense, Mitchell's above concerns about code in 1995 have been rendered supererogatory by 2003. Code evolved more quickly than he could have imagined. Nobody writes code; increasingly it merely appears as written. Moreover, one worries less about who is marginalized by code; more and more people are simply enabled by it, even whether or not they have computers or do e-mail. If there are writers of the rules, they are answerable to no one—and we do not care, since all we want to do is to log on or enjoy a secure connection.

At one point in Don DeLillo's latest novel, Cosmopolis, a woman makes the following glazed pronouncement, while regarding the various digital displays on screens in a limo: "People will not die. Isn't this the creed of the new culture? People will be absorbed in streams of information...Computers will die. They're dying in their present form. They're just about dead as distinct units. A box, a screen, a keyboard. They're melting into the texture of everyday life" (DeLillo 2003: 104). Cosmopolis provides a kind of fictionalized reading of Mitchell, from the lofty perspective of its protagonist, Eric Packer, a billionaire assets manager. Why a billionaire? In order for the text to test the possibility of standing outside the System (whether It is defined as Capitalism, the Internet, or something else). The array of "visual display units" testify to Its ubiquity, giving "data" so much pulsation as to be almost formless. "Hand-held space, " we read, is "almost finished now. The context was nearly touchless. He could talk most systems into operation or wave a hand at a screen and make it go blank" (DeLillo 2003: 13).

And yet, no matter how sovereignly connected (the sovereignty including its own resistance, and therefore foreclosing some Foucault-driven critique), Packer remains lodged in his body. He has sex twice during the narrative, as well as a digital prostate exam, and the catalyst of the narrative is his desire to get a haircut across town. The visual display units in the limo become a species of alternate flesh, the exterior form of electronic energy beyond not only form but content, purpose, and certainly code. "We are not witnessing the flow of information so much as pure spectacle, " Packer muses, "or information made sacred, ritually unreadable. The small monitors of the office, home and car become a kind of idolatry here, where crowds might gather in astonishment" (DeLillo 2003: 80). We can take e-mail as representative of activity on the scale of one of these monitors. (Cosmopolis disdains to mention e-mail specifically.) In comparison to the data stream, e-mail seems fleshy and context-

bound.

Worse, e-mail appears hopelessly subjective. Its source, if not extension, is personal. It continues to flow beneath visibility—as we understand anew each time an instance of e-mail does accidentally become visible. As I write, for example, an e-mail message by a Wall Street Journal reporter working in Iraq has created something of a scandal, once it "made its way" to the Internet. (Reports do not say how the transmission occurred.) The reporter apparently intended the message for friends only. But the description of her own working conditions—in which she cannot leave her hotel room for fear of being killed—is felt to be at least as compelling as her more "objective" social and political reports on the chaos into which Baghdad has fallen. Presumably at least some of these reports have been conveyed electronically. What counts as e-mail, though, is the private register, and its subjective dimension.

But this, in turn, appears scarcely worth accounting for, particularly in the new mobile universe of dying computers and nomadic code. The least we can say is that the moment of "idolatry" is over for e-mail. Different than a letter or a telephone call, it is now nonetheless merely another available form of communication, about which we can afford to be incurious. "Obviously, " Mitchell remarks, "it is possible, in principle, to precisely track things through networks, but in practice we rarely care about this. We experience networks at their interfaces, and only worry about the plumbing behind the interfaces when something goes wrong" (Mitchell 2003: 15). "E-mail" has emerged as the name of the "plumbing, " the network that plumbing makes possible, the peculiar program that permits access to the network, and the particular kind of personal communication that the program, the network, and the plumbing afford.

In effect, therefore, e-mail has been absorbed into the "data stream" so thoroughly that the fact your program is subject to code, like all else, need be recalled only if you happen to forget your password. Another item from the day's newspaper: instant messaging is no more merely an affair of the desktop—now it has gone mobile and is increasingly being sent from cellphones. So is a discussion of e-mail at the present time obliged to try to distinguish instant messaging from e-mail? (Or even cellphones from computers?) What about the social and political effects of yet another new feature of electronic computation? Meanwhile, again, the technology proceeds, it seems, with a connective momentum of its own; as Mitchell notes: " [l]aptops are beginning to talk wirelessly to video projectors, projectors and cameras to printers, telephones to speaker systems, video cameras to monitors . . . and so on" (Mitchell 2003: 164).

The technology comprises all so much "talk," precisely. E-mail? Merely one register for the relay. We can accent the experience of subjective freedom e-mail affords on the individual level. But only, it seems to me, if we emphasize how both the freedom and the level are won by virtue of a code that cannot itself be experienced. The closest we get to experiencing it are those moments when the wondrous immateriality and immanence of electronic connection itself appears suddenly in some outer form—the Internet café you need to find when abroad so you can e-mail at all, or the workplace you realize is utterly fixed because the e-mail you took to be private was in fact being backed up all along. (As Mitchell notes: "Whenever you send an email . . . you create copies on multiple servers, and those servers are automatically backed up at regular intervals" (Mitchell 2003: 183). And then at these moments what can we conclude? Let me relate a final story to bear on the final question.

Once he went away to graduate school, a former student and I got to know each other better through e-mail than we ever did in life. Nay, our daily e-mails to each other eventually became as much a part of our respective lives as the morning's coffee or the afternoon's classes. We attached various items from the web, we exchanged papers, but mostly we just talked, often in the form of long posts about literature read, movies seen, convictions shared, and ideas pondered. Our e-mail continued in this manner for some years, through his eventual completion of a doctorate, a first job, and then a second, which coincided with my early retirement from my own position, and then four-year contract with a university in Japan. Bill's second job was with a huge, Internet-based business.

Early on, he told me of some sort of friction with a supervisor. I do not remember exactly what. Perhaps it did not really matter. This new corporate culture was rife with power, all of it intense, elusive, combative. In order to prove it, one day at a large employee meeting area the supervisor suddenly pressed a few buttons on a nearby laptop and flashed a page's worth of Bill's recent e-mails on an overhead screen for all to see. Bill was especially embarrassed to read the emails to his wife, full of private terms of affection as well as reference about the business. His fellow workers were all very amused at this demonstration. It was as if e-mail was suddenly revealed not to be, well, e-mail, but instead a public rather than private form of communication, written rather than oral, and fixed rather than fluid.

What to conclude? In our immediate experience of e-mail, few of us ever attain, or perhaps imagine, such a moment of visibility. And yet it seems to me that we had better proceed as if this moment is ceaselessly available, not to each one of us but instead to the systems in which our e-mail is programmed, transmitted, and stored. In each case, code has been written. Code remains the law. No more than Hardt and Negri, I want to waiver on the crucial matter of what their idiom would characterize as its "sovereignty. " My own immediate experience of e-mail abides as free and subjective. And yet I know not only that it is bounded but constructed according to certain laws that I neither know or care to know, by means of which is attained what Hardt and Negri term "the circulating society of the spectacle. " They are speaking of ether, or the third medium of imperial control (the first two being the bomb and money), in which—in part—sovereignty is articulated through communication systems. How? By "attack[ing] the very possibility of linking an order to a space" and "impos[ing] a continuous and complete circulation of signs" (Hardt and Negri 2000: 347).

What to do once an extreme limit of the dissolution between order and space is reached? I take this limit to be continuous with what Mitchell so devoutly imagines as the completely wireless (and therefore connected) globe. Hardt and Negri conclude as follows: "At this point we cannot conceive this relationship except in another space [their italics], an elsewhere that cannot in principle be contained in the articulation of sovereign acts" (Hardt and Negri 2000: 347). What this means for e-mail is simple: the need for another space becomes manifest in another account. Or even another, and another. People who have several e-mail addresses are not only acting out the plenitude of virtual selfhood that [cyber]space makes possible. They are performing the circulating society of the spectacle; no matter that there are few sovereign personages (of whom we can take DeLillo's Packer to be one) in position to comprehend it. Moreover, where to locate an impossible space where some need for sovereignty can at least be performed, and perhaps in addition where some reconnection between space and order can be made?

In the case of my former student—with whom, years ago, through e-mail it would have been a rare pleasure to explore this last point at some length—the process of the dissolution between order and space had grown too advanced. Not only were we now more physically distant. His new job imposed enormous demands—all of them having to do with e-mail. He took out a Yahoo account, possibly another, and then wrote for awhile from still another address that seemed to be that of his business. But the actual can only collapse so much into the virtual, and fixed space can only dissolve so far into cyberspace. Slowly, inexorably, the two of us ceased to communicate. To the end, we retained a connection: our respective addresses. But a connection is not the same thing as a relation. There is not yet code for a relation, and, it appears, still only a limited amount of space.

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Scanning Fast Capitalism: Quasipolitan Order and New Social Flowmations

Timothy W. Luke

Fast capitalism is a 24/7 reality. Its statics and dynamics require social theorists to delve into dromology, or disciplined discursive deliberations over the new modes of power and knowledge generated by speed itself. As one gains awareness of how speed shapes social practices, it is clear that social theory must consider the power of kinetics as a fundamental force in everyday life. Whether it is defined as "dromocracy" (Virilio 1986), "time-space compression" (Harvey 1989) or "fast capitalism" (Agger 1989), today's temporal terrains, as Virilio asserts, are embedded in "chrono-politics" through which "speed rules" over every aspect of life now being reformatted by "the dromocratic revolution" (Virilio and Lotringer 1983:43-51). These effects are both global and local in their scope and impact, although their impact on culture, economy, and society is not fully understood.

Consequently, this analysis develops an alternative critical approach to "kinematics," or the study of practice-carrying motions considered in themselves, for understanding the unusual fixities of form coevolving with the rushing ephemeralities of global flows. "Since movement creates the event," as Virilio argues, "the real is kinedramatic"(1995:23). A theoretical appreciation of the kinedramatic also indicates that the currents of global exchange are generating cohesive structures of movement on a worldwide scale, or "kineformations," which could be understood as "global flowmations" (Luke and Ó Tuathail 1998). These actually existing new social formations in the fast capitalist world are held together within the compressed time-space of flowmationalized discourses and practices. Whether it is Nike, FedEx, British Air or Exxon, transnational capital sells speed as either its key service or as a critical quality of its products. Flowmationalization, in turn, expresses the kinedramatic events of globalization as the dominant operating logic of the post-1989 New World Order.

Global flowmationalization develops gradually out of transnational discourses and practices as a world of sovereign governments from the seventeenth century and its Westphalian system of nation-states erupts with dromological trends as it comes under the sovereign reach of world governmentality. The "slow folks" get separated from the "fast class," "steady savers" are run over by "fast money," "slow growth" falls into disfavor with "fast pay-offs" as speed rules. Indeed, "fellow traveling" at common rates of speed eclipses common citizenship in place as a key nexus of many individuals' identity. The volatilization of once solid states by global trade, media, traffic, and data flows has compressed traditional permacultures into today's ephemeracultures (Luke 1992:72-76), embedding corporate engineered fast capitalist turnover into the reproduction of everyday life.

Still, such ruptures are costly. As Virilio observes about today's world, destroying "its stationary organization merely revealed that tendency to chaos, which, according to Schlegel, is hidden in all ordered creation" (1995:71-72). The purposive construction of chaos as capitalist opportunity clearly advances the interests of transnational enterprise inasmuch as new strange attractors of desire and goods spontaneously order chaotic flows of needs and satisfactions in global markets. Liberating these flows to go anywhere anytime anyway has extraordinary kinedramatic effects, because it means

...not only annihilating the duration of information—of the image and its path—but with these all that endures or persists. What the mass media attack in other institutions (democracy, justice, science, the arts, religion,

morality, culture) are not the institutions themselves but the instinct of self-preservation that lies behind them. That is, what they still retain of bygone civilizations for which everything was a material and spiritual preparation directed against disappearance and death, and in which communicating meant to survive, to remain. (Virilio 1995:53)

Volatilizing old social formations, then, generates the turbulent chaos of today's New World Order in which these kineformations of global exchange emerge around the vortices of various strange attractors and shapeshifting wormholes in flowmations of commodities, currencies or concepts. On the one hand, one finds corporate entities celebrating the new freedoms of kineformation. Their plastic Visa cards carrying anyone anywhere anytime 24/7; and, on the other hand, one hears laments over the loss of what was once regarded as trusted and reliable sites of good incomes, stable employment, and moral consensus.

Foucault's genealogies of capitalism, statism, and managerialism in modern Europe focuses on the interventions of governmentality: how they are developed, what ends they served, which structures were implicated in applying them. This analysis must continue today in new social flowmations. Most importantly, kinematic power disembeds people from the enduring persistence of localistic traditions, and then reconfigures them as individual integers of abstract populations to bring the whole planet into a "governmentalization of the state" (Foucault 1991:103). Global flowmations no longer need to ground their sense of right disposition, convenient ends or even things as such in very narrow national terms. The flux of tastes and flows of people give capitalist kineformations the leverage needed for interventions into everyday life as the power/knowledge containments for their biopowers. The move to tailor marketplaces to products or buyers to goods as fast as tastes change, or can be changed, is one dromocracy of flowmationalization. Transnational businesses, media groups, banking syndicates, and national blocs all feed these tendencies toward world governmentality by advancing their own polyglot visions of convenience to engineer the right disposition of things for producers and consumers. This pluralization of global populations "as a datum, as a field of intervention, and as an object of governmental techniques" (Foucault 1991:102) is the basis of world governmentality. And, the kineformations of commodities emerge as part and parcel out of the major dromocratic shifts which no longer "isolate the economy as a specific sector of reality" (Foucault 1991:102), but rather transform economics into an identity that is the universalizing totality of the real.

As flowmationalizing disruptions get launched, the world's populations suffer promotional diasporas. Forced out of their hometowns, homecities, homelands or homeworlds they enter the kineformations of their own special Nike Towns, Sun Cities, Disneylands, and Mac Worlds. Once fixed in place there, globalizing fast capitalist agencies, like Citibank, McDonalds or Gap, and not traditional nation-states, increasingly sustain the disciplines and/or delights needed "to manage a population" not only as a "collective mass of phenomena, the level of its aggregate effects," but also "the management of population in its depths and details" (Foucault 1991:102). Flowmationality, in turn, becomes a group focus in such flowmations, and nationality often fades, or maybe even fails, for the fast capitalist classes. Such lifestyles enable one to flow locally along with styled living as high standards of living cash out in the fast lane as paths to living up to high standards in the global flows. If one judges their success more often by the goods and services shared by the other "successful fifth" of nations (Reich 1991) against that denied the "failed four-fifths," even though they are still perhaps one's fellow citizens, then one discovers their closest coaccelerants riding the same fast capitalist tracks in polyglot global flowmations. Since 1979, globalist neoliberals have sung the praises of the marketplace to create a seamless World Wide Web of exchange so that anybody anytime can prowl to associate themselves with those things the fast classes find to be mutually satisfying solutions for living on a small planet. Some currents of commodification keep capital and people contained at home, while others accelerate them outward in the world's flows.

I. Rethinking Kineformations and Freedom

To make political or social theory matter, one must ask, "where are we going?" (Flyvbjerg 2001:612). What is being regarded as desirable is too simple: trust scientific experts and business owners to do what is best for the common good in accord with prevailing scientific and business practices. Liberal democratic assumptions about science and capital privilege those with the technology (or the "know-how") and/or who have capital (or the "own-how") in the economy and society (see Yanow 1996) with kineformative power. Yet, these same assumptions ignore how fully those same economic and social relations are organized to guarantee that most members in society cannot

acquire know-how or accumulate own-how (Mumford 1963; and 1970). In fact, the existing regime of power/ knowledge in liberal democratic society of the U.S.A. actively works to ensure that most of its members do not know-how or own-how it operates, because the subpolitical impulse has mostly displaced the political as the driving force in most economies and societies (Baudrillard 1981).

Unlike the larger public projects anchoring what is usually identified as "the polis," fast capitalism unveils much smaller corporate and professional agendas for private profit and power that sustain the broader and denser networks at the core of today's economy and society, which Beck sees as a realm of "the subpolitical." The financial, professional, and technical networks behind the subpolis freeze possibilities for collective action and imagination somewhere between a traditional vision of politics and non-politics (Luke 1999). As Beck suspects, big technological systems, like cybernetic networks, telecommunications grids, or computer applications, are becoming the material basis for kineformative powers as,

> ...a third entity, acquiring the precarious hybrid status of a sub-politics, in which the scope of social changes precipitated varies inversely with their legitimation....The direction of development and results of technological transformation become fit for discourse and subject to legitimation. Thus business and techno-scientific action acquire a new political and moral dimension that had previously seemed alien to techno-economic activity....now the potential for structuring society migrates from the political system into the sub-political system of scientific, technological, and economic modernization. The political becomes non-political and the non-political political....A revolution under the cloak of normality occurs, which escapes from possibilities of intervention, but must all the same be justified and enforced against a public becoming critical....The political institutions become the administrators of a development they neither have planned for nor are able to structure, but must nevertheless somehow justify....Lacking a place to appear, the decisions that change society become tongue-tied and anonymous....What we do not see and do not want is changing the world more and more obviously and threateningly. (Beck 1992:186-187)

Ironically, then, collective decisions made by technicians and tradesmen to structure the economy and society around such "subpolitical systems of scientific, technological, and economic modernization" (Beck 1992:186) are now changing the world in kineformative structures without much, if any, direct state regulation, political planning, or civic legitimation (Beck 1997).

From these structural contradictions, the promise of freedom emerges as a space without boundaries, a place of complete immediacy without sheltering barriers, and a decentered zone for commercial performance. With scientific experts carefully engaged in 24/7 surveillance over many local economies and environments, dromologies take us essentially "back in spatial itself," and critical analysis might infer "a certain supplement of spatiality in the contemporary period and suggests that there is a way in which, even though other modes of production....are distinctively spatial, ours has been spatialized in a unique sense, such that space is for us an existential and cultural dominant, a thematized or foregrounded feature or structural principle standing in striking contrast to its relatively subordinate and secondary....role in earlier modes of production" (Jameson 1992:365).

Decisions taken on one level at a certain scale and tempo in national space, then, rebound on another level for individuals living and working in other scales and tempos in technified space as kineformative fields of practice. Because the subpolitical runs beneath, beside or behind the national with its more openly administrative processes and structures, its workings are essentially subpolitical both by design and default. The prerogatives of professional expertise and individual property in liberal democratic societies are essentially unquestioned. In turn, the restraints of the subpolitical are created. Liberal codes of property and professional credos of technocracy become shields held up against all political attempts to ask the "who, whom" question of infrastructures, systems, and technologies in national politics. Meanwhile, it is in the subpolitics of transnational systems where the real decisions about "who, whom" are made, and then made to hold fast (Luke 1999).

Precise knowledge about the space and its inhabitants in this context is meant to guide "the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes" (Foucault 1980:141). Not everyone will be inserted or adjusted in same ways to make these mechanisms succeed. Instead, new inequalities and unfreedoms come from kinematic ensembles of economic exchange shifting their value-added products to a few privileged locales, leaving their value-detracting by-products in many other places that now divide the world's populations and space in new degraded ways that are taken to be, at the same time, "free to choose." In this manner, the practices of governmentality serve as "methods of power capable of optimizing forces, aptitudes, and life in general without at the same time making them more difficult to govern" (Foucault 1980:141). Indeed, the most decisive revolutions are being made globally and locally, as Beck maintains, "under the cloak of normality" (1992:186) in the realms framed by technics and economics. Therefore, "in contemporary discussions," as

Beck suggests, "the alternative society" is no longer expected to come from parliamentary debates on new laws, but rather from the application of microelectronics, genetic technology, and information media" (1992:223).

II. On "Quasification"

Alongside Beck's thoughts on the subpolitical, Latour claims that modernity has little to do with the invention of humanism, the emergence of science, the secularization of society or the mechanization of the world. Instead, his analysis of the present highlights a modern willingness to accept as "truths" the conjoined generation of new Nature/Society/God constructs in which a series of checked-and-balanced pairings switch between transcendence and immanence. Simultaneously, those who are modernizing or modernized can believe:

> They have not made Nature; they make Society; they make Nature; they have not made Society; they have not made either, God has made everything; God has made nothing; they have made everything.... By playing three times in a row on the same alienation between transcendence and immanence, we moderns can mobilize Nature, objectify the social, and feel the spiritual presence of God, even while firmly maintaining that Nature escapes us, that Society is our own work, and that God no longer intervenes. (Latour 1993:34)

Accepting these constitutional principles permits hybrid collectives (Latour 1993:4) to proliferate—as the abstractions typically labeled as science, technology, culture, society or markets—as kinedramatic modernity. Hybrids are the fabric of our lives, those good things corporations bring to life, or where science and technology get down to business, while they deny the very existence of these hybridized actualities in conventional Enlightenment fables of live human subjects dominating dead non-human objects through science and technology. "The essential point of this modern Constitution," as Latour maintains, "is that it renders the work of mediation that assembles hybrids invisible, unthinkable, unrepresentable" (1993:34).

Modernization, as Latour frames it, requires two sets of practices: translation, which mixes entirely new types of beings, or hybrids of nature and culture; and purification, which disputes these mixtures as it "creates two entirely different ones: that of human beings on the one hand; that of nonhumans on the other" (1993:10-11). As long as everything and everyone treats these practices as separate and distinct, then one can think and be "modern." Translation builds conventionalized constructs in the networks of quasi-subjects/quasi-objects betwixt "a natural world that has always been there, a society with predictable and stable interests and stakes, and a discourse that is independent of both reference and society" (Latour 1993:11). Any effective analysis of modernity, then, must confront the "quasification" processes in hybridity, because clearly "objects are not the shapeless recreatables of social categories—neither the 'hard' ones nor the 'soft' ones....Society is neither that strong nor that weak; objects are neither that weak nor that fabricated, much more collective than the 'hard' parts of nature, but they are in no way the arbitrary receptacles of a full-fledged society" (Latour 1993:55). Environments—artificial or natural—cannot be understood fully without seeing how these quasifications constantly either pull back into purifications of discourse or fail to disclose translations in action. As they do, speed matters most.

Nature's supercession creates a second nature, a processed world or a postmodern condition—mixing together quasi-objects and quasi-subjects—in which those who own and control the material and mental means of enforcing order amidst these asymmetries concretize new inequalities on a global scale in many landscapes, places, and spaces—urban, rural, suburban, and exurban—which are neither metropolitan nor peripheral. Without saying so, Latour here essentially walks into Beck's subpolitical domain. Indeed, where we are going derives from the quasi-objective and quasi-subjective characteristics of people and things caught up within routine governmentality. Who gains and who loses are conditions that fuse hybridized objects and subjects within techno-scientific quasification in all of its amorphic (con)fusions. Here one finds the quasipolitical order in which speed is matter, and in which kineformations must matter—which are global and local, industrial and agricultural, commercial and nonprofit, urban and rural, built and unbuilt.

Knit together out of quasi-objects and quasi-subjects into systems of politicized technocultural practice, and, desirable or not, this praxis constitutes our kinedramatic forms, ways or standards of living. One example of such quasipolitical forces is "the grid"—that system of systems that generate, distribute, and use electricity to sustain living in the fast lane. Others would be the food machines, water works, road systems, freight carriers, housing complexes, mass media or health services that also shape the spaces and sites of urban-industrial life quite profoundly

as matter as well as materialized social science. Where we are going, following Flyvbjerg, became a path paved with such artifacts as they came together during the Gilded Age. It congealed—via episteme, techne, and phronesis—both to structure agency and to activate structures in those countries that can develop and deploy such systems of systems—water, sewer, gas, electricity, telegraph, telephone, road, and rail—to organize both their subjects' and objects' conduct. As these modernizing processes unfold, praxes of "the polis" become entwined with clusters of quasified operations embedded in "the quasipolis," or these hybridizations of machinic systems, human populations, and territorial spaces. Indeed, the unfolding of world capitalist markets are part and parcel of a "quasipolitan" order, which anchors, in part, "freedom to," "freedom from," and "freedom through."

The attainment of popular sovereignty during and after the Enlightenment clearly constitutes a major milestone for liberty in the North Atlantic Basin, which demands certain correlative forms of subjection, certain types of domination or control to operate well (Luke 1999a). This empowerment of people through technified media of control, information, and order in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries makes society and science central to modes of "freedom" set forth by the Enlightenment (Foucault 1991). Strangely enough, this transformation is not juridico-political as much as it is techno-economic. Therefore, few, if any, studies by political theorists or cultural critics have investigated its ramifications. While popular sovereignty plainly marks a transfer of authority to the people, getting "power to the people" through quasipolitan means now constitutes the sine qua non of "modernity." This kind of liberating empowerment rarely is, however, thought about systematically.

Of course, societies exist with popular political sovereignty, and no quasipolitan liberties; and, other societies attain quasipolitian liberties without enjoying popular political sovereignty. In seeking to make it matter, most conventional social science focuses with classical realist categories upon men and their quest for power in each national polis exercising the will to dominate every other polis. A more realistic reading of these times, however, should look at the quasipolis of international, national, regional, and local systems in which "all that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind" (Marx and Engels 1978:476). There are different struggles among men, and women, within the quasipolis over how to, first, make possible and then, second, why to take to relying upon these probable nonhuman conditions of life, as new relations with both their own kind and other machinic systems. Living inside the accidental normality of today's advanced built environments is made possible, or impossible, by the power and knowledge embedded in material regimens that run the kineformative grids of water, gas, sewer, road, telephone, radio, television, and electricity systems interwoven into every quasipolis. Here one can, and should, make social theory matter.

III. Kinematics and Quasipolitics

Quasipolitanization could be seen as the unfolding of reason in history, but then, as Lyotard argues, such appeals to rational development do not convince many people these days. Few now believe that progress in knowledge or technology will bring "a society emancipated from poverty, despotism, and ignorance. But all of us can see that the development continues to take place without leading to the realization of any of these dreams of emancipation" (Lyotard 1984:39). Rather poverty, despotism, and ignorance have become naturalized as background conditions for many in the world, while a few organize the artificial world to realize hyperdeveloped outcomes that openly undercut most of modernity's myths (Tabb 2001). With this eclipse of politics by the systems of quasipolitics, Lyotard asserts science and technology are falling under the sway of "another language game, in which the goal is no longer truth, but performativity—that is, the best possible input/output equation" (1984:46) in synchronizing the productivity or quasi-objects and quasi-subjects together.

Technologies never fall fully fabricated or ready made out of the clouds (Adas 1989; and, Nye 1990). They must instead be made ready by their owners and/or managers for some sort of profitable business and personal use by enrolling producers, consumers, and advocates in new social movements to build national systems that promote their utility, tout their necessity, and herald their inevitability as "freedoms to" (Greenfeld, 2001). How to live in societies organized around such systems of sustaining systems, as they are embedded within commodity markets, is now a disciplinary approach to life that virtually is ignored by mainstream political science. Yet, everyday life requires a broad range of new cultural compliances from everyone acceding to, or resisting against, the governmentality created by the quasipolis' many different language games, various skill sets, and several new

systemic technocultures (Agger 1989).

The multiplicity of material human interests in civil society once rose politically from distinct quarters of cities, regions, and nations among divergent occupational, financial, and technical groups distinguishable by their class, ethnic, and religious memberships (Mumford 1963). The satisfaction of human needs today, however, transpires quasipolitically in the world market where large and small corporate entities oversee cycles of production and consumption for the goods and services required to supply global demands (Nye 1996; and, Reich 1991).

Firms concentrate energy, information, and material in market exchange. Their operational networks, in-house technologies, and company strategies constitute the everyday environments needed for organizing, institutionalizing, and enjoying the economic performances of many different agents and structures (Tabb 2001). These social forces do this with near complete authority, but political science essentially neglects it. They configure agents and structures as quasipolities—without sovereignty but with authority, regulations, power, and identities—in many other places around the region, different countries, or even the world at large in support of their particular corporate, national, and technical systems by collecting information, moving people, using energy, and processing materials as it suits them. As a result, the public agenda, when it is understood as politics, rarely moves forward unless it too is shaped to serve the quasipolitical interests of what allegedly is the public per se. Thus, the system of systems first serves a much smaller subset of highly salient interests espoused by the owners of big companies and/or expert managers of powerful technologies (Virilio 1997).

Corporations now function, because of the systems of systems in global markets, as complex machines (Luke 1996; Greenfeld 2001; and, Goldstone 2001). Furthermore, producers and consumers in almost all the world's markets are compelled, for the most part, to express their goals, find their resources, and generate their life outcomes out of the machinic operations of such major corporations. The seat of empowerment, understood as the generation of development, modernization or even civilization, now flows through the accidental normality that rests upon such quasipolitical systems. Inasmuch as any modern culture represents corporate acts and company artifacts shaped by particular enterprises in specific settings, the good life promised by the polis is now made and remade from ideas and material things mobilized to advance profit-seeking corporate strategies (Luke 1989). Today, for example, many would see "empowerment" first as getting electricity rather than attaining popular sovereignty. Before "powering up" society, most forms of development and modernization are hard to envision. By the twentieth century, then, it was no accident that attaining "freedom" required "power." Clearly, Lenin regarded attaining socialism for the USSR as being equal to "electrification plus Soviet rule" or that General Electric in the USA has seen its corporate mission as "bringing good things to life" through electricity.

Electrification's, motorization's or mechanicization's modes of empowerment, for example, shows how market-based technologies of production and the self cogenerate new kineformative linkages between objective systemic productivity and subjective idiosyncratic consumption for producers and consumers in the quasipolitical regimens of globalization through objects (Baudrillard 1996). "Plugging in" becomes tacit consent to governmentality's dictates as technics conduct one's conduct through multiple technified grids of command, control, and communication as "freedom through" the system. The end users of corporate commodities are redesignated through their purchase of commodities to play the role of capital asset, causing "the ultimate realization of the private individual as a productive force. The system of needs must wring liberty and pleasure from him as so many functional elements of the reproduction of the system of production and the relations of power that sanction it" (Baudrillard 1981:85). In other words, corporate plans for social transformation gain life, liberty, and property through the buying decisions of individuals rather than the other way around. For transnational businesses, the liberation of personal "wants" or individual "needs," as they are allegedly felt by everyone anywhere, is fixed by making more and more commodities hitherto inaccessible in many markets available to all who desire them.

Liberating these needs, however, matches capital and its experts with new mobilizations of fresh commodities (Virilio 1997). Subjectivity is redefined through quasipolitanization as a material need for coexisting with artifacts and systems as commodified goods, and modern subjects are those who can be defined by their material demand for such goods and services freely designed to supply and thereby satisfy them (Baudrillard 1996). Disciplinary objectivities, in turn, shape disciplined subjectivity through quasipolitan order. As Baudrillard observes,

> The consumption of individuals mediates the productivity of corporate capital; it becomes a productive force required by the functioning of the system itself, by its process of reproduction and survival. In other words, there are these kinds of needs because the system of corporate production needs them. And the needs invested by the individual consumer today are

just as essential to the order of production as the capital invested by the capitalist entrepreneur and the labor power invested in the wage laborer. It is all capital. (Baudrillard 1981:82)

Ideologies of competitive corporate growth realized through the exploitation of labor are inscribed in each quasipolitical commodity, even though these authoritative objects are delivered to compliant consumers as true tokens of the new "freedoms to" find their collective liberation via "the market."

The consumer, then, never is an inert, passive target. He/she is an active, volatile capacitor in every quasipolitical circuit of these systems of systems to generate corporate power effects (Falk 1999; and, French 2000). As company growth targets circulate through nets of normalization, mechanized goods and powered up services help constitute both individuality and collectivity around the norms of quasipolitan grids. Expertise and ownership constitute a program of command and control, and they communicate themselves through the evershifting normalization routines of electrical, mechanical or informational commodities (Luke 1989). When consumers admit that "they're living it," or that products give them "that feeling," or that buying the right stuff gets them "connected," it is clear that individual subjects have become repositioned kinedramatically by their material possessions in the manifold agendas of quasipolitical globalism. General Electric historically has prided itself in "bringing good things to life," but it now asks, "What can GE do for you." Appliances, applicants, and applications then become what you can do for GE; hence, as the nexus of electrification serves as the quasipolitical bridge for how those good things are brought into life as GE "does" you. Here Foucault would note, "individuals are vehicles of power, not its points of articulation" (1980:98). The true range of modernized subjectivities, then, is formed, in part, at the cash and commodity nexus with the objects produced, in part, by technified systems of systems (Luke 2001).

Commodities, like those fabricated in, by, and for residents of the quasipolis, rise and fall in the markets, but operate as "a polymorphous disciplinary mechanism" (Foucault 1980:106) for corporate, and indirectly, state power. Individually and collectively, the machinic assemblies producing these artifacts carefully have cultivated over the past century "their own discourse," and "they engender…apparatuses of knowledge (savoir) and a multiplicity of new domains of understanding" (Foucault 1980:106). For the omnipolitan systems of systems, commodities are simultaneously carriers of discourse, circuits of normalization, and conduits of discipline, which corporations use to possess their individual proprietors with the properties of their systems as reified as artifacts of personal property. This is the "freedom to" choose, and it is—to answer Flyvbjerg—"where are we going" (2001:162). Quasipolitics, however, continues to be ignored by most political science assessments of world order. Yet, in the postmodern condition, governmentality through the quasipolis cannot be overlooked any longer. There is little commodious social or political living for humanity in/of/for the polis without the effective commercial, economic, industrial, and technological operations of systems of systems interoperating with nonhumanity in/of/for the quasipolis.

IV. Conclusion

At this juncture, trends in kineformative governmentality, and their links to negative and positive freedom, gain significance because the capillaries of control where social science can matter are so pervasive. That is, questions of freedom in the quasipolis always, "lie across the distinction between theory and practice, across the borders of specialties and disciplines, across the specialized competencies and institutional responsibilities, across the distinction between value and fact (and thus between ethics and science), and across the realms of politics, the public sphere, science and the economy, which are seemingly divided by institutions" (Beck 1992:70). While their mechanisms are complex, the workings of kinematic governmentality unfold at these intersections between the technics of domination and cultivating the self.

Flowmationization is planned decentering, intentional unbounding, and purposive deterritorialization in quasipolitics. Flowmational structures never rest anywhere—save in flight to and from their points of source and reception. Like the components of goods kept in permanent transit as fixed subunits of unfixed superunits, like the parts and pieces of Toyotas prior to their Toyotification at kanban assembly points flowing through disassembly lines, flowmations are shaped and steered by telemetries of regulation as well as the strange attractions of chaos. Flexible specializations spring into and out of rigid generalizations, riddling the latter's grounded authority with

flows of power/knowledge seeking their transnational populations to command and control.

The rule of speed underlies most existing imaginaries of modernization and development as they come to us as post-Cold War globalism. Modernization has implicitly always suggested something like mobilization / acceleration / intensification as the biorhythms of ageless customs become infused with flowmational forces. Modernity's time-space compression is a xenotransplantation of energies and motions from fast zones to slow zones, anticipating in toto Marinetti's manifestations of Futurism: "with us begins the reign of uprooted man, of multiple man who gets tangled up in iron and feeds on electricity. Let's make way for the eminent and inevitable identification of man with the motor" (cited in Virilio 1995:129). Like the channels of any fluidized exchange, quasipolitical kineformations in core regions capture traffic with high-value, fast-rate, top-level qualities. Surrounding these flows with a strangely attracted peripheral band of flows in low-value, slow-rate, low-level exchanges, one finds immediate boundary layers of semi-peripheral/quasi-core flows that mix and match these leading and lagging currents. This flowmational interdependence crosscuts territorialized domains with deterritorialized kineformative currents. On these terrains, then, social theory can begin to explore the politics of fast capitalism as flowmationalization totally reworks our senses of place and experiences of space in cultural kineformations spun up from within the quasipolitical order.

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Ever Onward: The Frontier Myth and the Information Age

Jack Shuler

In 1995 Bill Gates, the software pioneer, entrepreneur, billionaire, and now philanthropist, offered a critique of a term made famous by former vice-president and champion of the Internet[1] Al Gore. In The Road Ahead, Gates argues that the term for the emerging communication network, the "information superhighway," is ill-conceived. He writes, "The phrase suggests landscape and geography, a distance between points…When you hear the phrase 'information superhighway,' rather than seeing a road imagine a marketplace or exchange" (Gates, Myhrvold, and Rinearson 1995: 5-6). Both metaphors are apropos. The former describes a network crisscrossing a landscape, with on-ramps and off-ramps, exits and entrances, stores and outposts, commerce and society intertwined along the route. The latter suggests a location for trade in goods and ideas where the conversation is as important as the business at hand. Both metaphors describe places.

In an essay published the same year as The Road Ahead, media critic Laura Miller suggests that "The Net… occupies precisely no physical space (although the computers and phone lines that make it possible do). It is a completely bodyless, symbolic thing with no discernible boundaries or location" (Miller 2001: 215). This assertion appears alongside a critique of contemporary use of language that is part and parcel of the frontier myth—the belief that the presence of open space coupled with a pioneering and entrepreneurial spirit best explains the growth of the United States. Miller is particularly critical of those who use the notion of the frontier in connection with the Internet. She claims that the Internet is a created space without limits while the "frontier" was contained within specific geographic boundaries, national borders, and, eventually, barbed-wire fences. Yet the Internet does have boundaries, limits, despite the fact that it is created space. Miller acknowledges this fact herself when discussing the necessity of material ownership—phone lines, digital cables, computers—for entering cyberspace.[2] By claiming that the Internet is without boundaries, she too takes part in the discourse of the frontier myth by conjuring up images of unbounded freedom.

Indeed, the Internet lacks the kinds of physical borders one imagines existed on the frontier, but it is very much a part of the physical and material world and is thus subject to the limits and regulations of that world. If we only conceive of the Internet as existing in some virtual reality or cyberspace, we will lose sight of the fact that it is inextricably linked to material conceptions of space, place, and, consequently, ownership of that space. This space includes not only the cables that link computers—the information superhighway—but the computers themselves, email and web addresses, chat rooms, and domain names. Increasingly governments, corporations, and civil society groups are working to limit the "freedom" of the Internet by creating boundaries, borders, and fences around and within these spaces. Users are asked to stake a claim, to seize upon some part of the space or to not trespass upon the space of others. Yet as this occurs—as court battles rage over copyrights and domain names, over the CIA's "Carnivore" program and the existence of the digital divide—the frontier myth and its accompanying discourse of freedom persists.

Recently the oft-described anarcho-libertarian ideology of "open source technology" has been co-opted by IBM in an ad campaign focusing on the freedom and limitless possibilities of the Linux operating system—one of the most the most successful open source projects. Linux was developed from an operating system called UNIX in 1991 by a Helsinki student named Linus Torvalds. Rather than keeping the source-code for his new software a secret, he published it on the burgeoning Internet allowing other programmers to examine it and improve it. Thus

the term "open source." Linux has gained the reputation, and rightfully so, for being a solid operating system that rarely crashes, unlike Microsoft's ubiquitous Windows which has a secret source-code.

During the 2004 Super Bowl, IBM launched its "Open" advertisement campaign—to promote the use of Linux with a series of commercials starring a blonde-haired boy in white t-shirt and blue jeans. This "golden child," we learn in later advertisements, is named Linux—just like the operating system. In one ad an announcer claims that nay-sayers believe "a closed world is a better world…The barriers are for your protection" (www.ibm.com/open, Sept. 29, 2004). The ad closes with two brief statements that flash on the screen: "Linux is ready. The future is open." In other ads the child sits thoughtfully in a chair in notable locales all over the world accompanied by an announcement that "The child went east, then west, then north, then south." IBM is selling the myth that with open source technology comes freedom, that with public access to programming source-code—the foundation of the digital world and of cyberspace—the world will become more unified and free. What is actually happening is the beginning of the end of the "open range" in cyberspace. For years programmers have been sharing code, i.e. property, in cyberspace, but now the technology industry has taken an interest and has begun to settle, claim, and purchase this code. In May Torvalds himself officially announced that those contributing to Linux must "sign their work and vouch for its origin" (Lohr 2004: 11). This policy was enacted, according to Torvalds, to protect against lawsuits amongst programmers and corporations over the origins of source-codes. Such policies are being enacted at the same time corporations like IBM are taking an interest in open source projects. Thus a cynical view of the situation is that IBM seeks to corner the market, to end Microsoft's control over operating system software, and perhaps create their own in the process. IBM is surveying a territory in hopes of staking a claim. Now that they have begun to stake that claim, with the help of copyright laws, the government will back them up. This is the story of the frontier in the United States in a nutshell. As soon as freedom is announced, as soon as a free-space is declared, it becomes settled, regulated, and purchased.

By describing the Internet as a frontier, pundits, entrepreneurs, and politicians are taking part in a discourse that has existed in this country for many years. The contemporary version of the frontier myth presents the Internet as a freewheeling space crafted by wily pioneers and ingenious scientists which is being populated by those who wish to participate in the space's inherent freedom. The superhighway metaphor adds to this vision by promoting images of construction: breaking ground, dynamiting through nature, and conquering space. Pioneering computer scientists did lead the way in developing the Internet, but they did so, for the most part, with the support of lawmakers and government officials. The U.S. government continues to watch over the Internet as there are significant reasons—commercial, military and cultural—for monitoring the "settlement" of this frontier. Some who monitor this frontier view it as a dangerous place that needs to be regulated in order to prevent the corruption of the American public—in particular, children. Note the many attempts by governments and activists to control and limit the content and use of the Internet.[3]

Several American writers in the 18th and 19th century, including Charles Brockden Brown, James Fennimore Cooper, J. Hector St. John de Crevecouer, and Thomas Jefferson, portray the frontier as both a place of limitless possibilities and a place to be feared. It was also a place to be conquered and controlled. This is most evident in the close attention Jefferson paid to legal precedence. His <u>Notes on the State of Virginia</u> foreshadows not only the possibilities of the frontier but the reality that the frontier as free space would be short-lived. Accordingly, by the end of the 19th Century the Superintendent of the Census announced the closing of the frontier in the United States. A little over one hundred years later pundits were announcing the closing of the technological frontier--the Internet. This more recent closing hints at a conscious desire to limit certain freedoms, to limit possibilities in a very real and material way. Thus an ambiguous view of the Internet as frontier emerges. On one hand, there are those who claim that it will provide limitless possibilities; on the other hand, there are those who believe it should be controlled. And sometimes such opinions are voiced by the same people.

What Is the Frontier?

Frederick Jackson Turner's 1893 paper "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," is cited here as a default foundational text of the frontier myth or what some call the "Turner Doctrine" or "Turner Thesis." His essay opens with the Superintendent of the Census's pronouncement in 1890 that the West, the frontier, had been settled (Turner 1962: 1). This was a turning point in American history because, according to Turner, the westward expansion

was the catalyst for the country's creation: "The existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward, explain American development." American life, he writes, is "continually beginning over again"; it is "fluid" (Turner 1962: 2). This fluidity and a need to work with and for the advancement of the frontier have even shaped institutions. Turner points out that, "legislation with regard to land, tariff, and internal improvements…was conditioned on frontier ideas and needs" (Turner 1962: 27). Most importantly, Turner believes that the frontier promoted democracy (Turner 1962: 30).

Indeed, the advance westward managed to shape the American psyche. According to Turner's scenario, each advance beyond the boundaries causes pioneers to step briefly into a world of savagery. The pioneers are transformed by this new environment, a free space apart from the rigors of civilization. However, Turner acknowledges, "civilization" and all its material advantages is not far behind as the frontier must, out of economic necessity, link up with cities, commerce, the Atlantic coast (Turner 1962: 6-7, 11). Trading posts act as the first advance of civilization and are followed shortly by army posts established to protect settlers from Natives. Settlement of the frontier, as described by Turner, is driven by the market.

Turner asserts that it is part of the nature of Americans to always advance rather than establish roots. So it was with the pioneers: "the demand for land and the love of wilderness freedom drew the frontier ever onward" (Turner 1962: 22). Turner believes that "movement" is "the dominant fact" of the United States and will likely continue to be so as "the American energy will continually demand a wider field for its exercise" (Turner 1962: 37). Americans are pulled by the existence of limitless possibility and will always need some outlet.

The "Turner Doctrine" defined Western history for decades until the latter part of the 20th century when a number of scholars, including Patricia Nelson Limerick, began to criticize the essentialist tendencies of this school of thought. Through her work Limerick seeks a more expansive history of the frontier that is not only about the spirit of the ever-conquering white male pioneer. She writes, "Turner's frontier rested on a single point of view; it required that the observer stand in the East and look to the West. Now like many scholars in other fields, Western historians have had to learn to live with relativism" (Limerick 1987: 25-6). The American history Limerick presents is one of competing narratives of race, ethnicity, and gender that cannot be summarized in one tight thesis. Despite the efforts of Limerick and other historians, popular culture continues to be enthralled by the Turnerian history of the frontier and its accompanying myths of cowboys, coyotes, and buffalo. Henry Nash Smith notes that the "Turner doctrine" is significant, despite its flaws, because, "It concerns the image of themselves which many—perhaps most—Americans of the present day cherish, an image that defines what Americans think of their past, and therefore what they propose to make of themselves in the future" (Smith 1950: 4). When the Smithsonian presented a more realistic portrait of the American frontier in a 1991 exhibit entitled "The West as America," there was some public outcry, and the museum's guest book received more than a few negative entries about the exhibit. Shortly thereafter, "Two Western senators…threaten[ed] to cut the Smithsonian's budget for this lapse in patriotism" (Limerick 1996: 15). Senatorial objections aside, the frontier was and is a contested space, and our relationship to this contested space is fraught with contradictions. Even amidst the tumultuous conception of the United States, Thomas Jefferson wrestled with these contradictions. On the one hand, he and other American writers saw the frontier as a place that could provide limitless freedom; on the other it is a place that must be controlled and regulated.

Property = Freedom

In Virgin Land Henry Nash Smith refers to Thomas Jefferson as "the intellectual father of the American advance to the Pacific" and pays close attention to the expedition of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark across the Rockies and into the Northwest (Smith 1950: 15). Jefferson wished to find a trade route up the Missouri River that would best the routes being used by the British. More American fur traders in this part of the frontier would mean a stronger hold on the area. Profits would lead to progress and the nation would be closer to controlling the frontier. On a practical level Lewis and Clark's mission was about economics and politics. But for Smith,

> the importance of the Lewis and Clark expedition lay on the level of imagination: it was drama, it was the enactment of a myth that embodied the future…and established the image of a highway across the continent so firmly in the minds of Americans that repeated failures could not shake it. (Smith 1950: 17)

Jefferson's connections to these "repeated failures" and his relationship to westward expansion will, in many respects, frame my discussion of the frontier myth. In his Notes on the State of Virginia one discovers his interest in

exploring the frontier, as well as his desire to control that exploration and future settlement schemes. In the exactness of Jefferson's descriptions is an underlying desire to explain and learn all he can about his state of Virginia—the Enlightenment scholar in him comes to the foreground. Jefferson's support of the expedition of Lewis and Clark is an extension of that desire to know and understand the nature of U.S. territory. If one knows the frontier, one can control the settlement of the frontier, and help keep the country united. Therefore we must not read Jefferson's meticulous lists of vegetables in Query VI as an exercise in botany but as a useful catalog for future investors and settlers.

This "cataloging" began when a number of queries were submitted to Jefferson by Francois Marbois in 1780, a trying time for the infant country, to say the least. Jefferson's twenty-three responses appear to be an attempt to show the French that this American "experiment" has a future. With exquisite precision he provides a detailed picture of the state of Virginia as he saw it as well as his own vision for the political future of that state and of the United States of America. Jefferson's vision for the U.S. does not include industrial cities as found in Europe (Jefferson 1999: 171). His would be a nation of farmers because, "Those who labour in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people, whose breasts he has made his peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue" (Jefferson 1999:170). We must leave manufacturing to Europe because it leads only to the "mobs of great cities" (Jefferson 1999: 171). He notes, "It is the manners and spirit of a people which preserve a republic in vigour. A degeneracy in these is a canker which soon eats to the heart of its laws and constitution." For Jefferson, farms are a means to preserve what Leo Marx calls "rural virtue" and are not necessarily dynamic financial catalysts for the new nation (Jefferson 1999: 126). But rapid economic growth is less important for Jefferson than social and political stability. His rural ideal would preserve the political structure, initiating "a virtual stasis that is a counterpart of the desired psychic balance or peace" (Levy 2005: 127). The development of this rural utopia and of long-term economic prosperity depends on the existence of the frontier. So, as Jefferson notes in Query XIX, America can avoid Industrial Europe's perils because of "an immensity of land courting the industry of the husbandman" (Jefferson 1999: 170).

Before Jefferson's vision could come to pass, the U.S. had to establish itself within the global community. One might view as a good will gesture to the world, or France, his desire "to throw open the doors of commerce, and to knock off all its shackles, giving perfect freedom to all persons for the vent of whatever they may chuse to bring into our ports, and asking the same in theirs" (Jefferson 1999: 180). Jefferson also "establishes" the US by including a lengthy catalog of documents that ground the U.S. in text, and therefore law. Query XXIII proves ownership of property by listing a variety of deeds and treaties that outline how the United States came to be. For example, the sixth text listed, dated February 6, 1583, is, "The letters-patent granted by her Majestie to Sir Humphrey Gilbert, knight, for the inhabiting and planning of our people in America" (Jefferson 1999: 185). Another from 1664 is a "conveiance of the Delaware counties to William Penn" (Jefferson 1999: 193). These texts provide a narrative of ownership, an archive that exhibits the American commitment to private property that has, in important ways, fueled the frontier myth. And most important for Jefferson, his ideal country rests on notions of ownership—the yeoman must own the farm he cultivates. Thus he includes in Notes on the State of Virginia an example of how land can come into possession—a potential model for acquiring and declaring ownership of the frontier.

Jefferson's apparent desire to control frontier settlement was rooted in a commitment to private property. Such a commitment has its greatest support in the U.S. Constitution which provides the ultimate protections of private property. The document opens with a preamble which includes the phrase, "secure the blessings of Liberty" and can be read as an endorsement of Lockean notions of the right to private property. The "5th Amendment" of the Constitution acknowledges that in the U.S. no one, "shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation." This was later clarified and expanded in the "14th Amendment" with the claim that states cannot "deprive" citizens of the United States of America "of life, liberty, or property, without the due process of law."

The right to private property is viewed by many as a quintessential value of the U.S. James Fennimore Cooper asserted that,

> If we would have civilization and the exertion indispensable to its success, we must have property; if we have property, we must have its rights; if we have the rights of property, we must take those consequences of the rights of property which are inseparable from the rights themselves. (Cooper 1953: 46)

Property is viewed as an American right. In Letters from an American Farmer, written around the same time that Jefferson wrote his Notes, J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur ties the ownership of land to the limitless possibilities

available to Americans, "a people of cultivators, scattered over an immense territory" (Cooper 1956: 36). In the U.S., he adds, "a man is free as he ought to be (Cooper 1956: 37). Crevecoeur believes America is a country of farmers of many nations, a place of promise for those who once lived in abject poverty in Europe: "Let him go to work, he will have opportunities enough to earn a comfortable support, and even the means of procuring some land" (Cooper 1956: 63). The emphasis is on owning property because with property—with ownership of and control of space—comes an apparent freedom for the individual. He writes, "The instant I enter my own land, the bright idea of property, of exclusive right, of independence exalt my mind. Precious soil…What should we American farmers be without distinct possession of that soil?" (Cooper 1953: 20).

In the 1840's the desire to own land was an important aspect of the popular belief in Manifest Destiny—the idea that it is the destiny of the U.S. to continue to grow and advance to the Pacific, laying claim to all territory along the way. Manifest Destiny is an expression of a much-shared belief in the necessity of property for prosperity and in the inherent exceptional nature of the American project. John L. O'Sullivan was one champion of this brand of American exceptionalism. In 1839 he wrote of the need to push onward to greatness and proclaimed, "The far-reaching, the boundless will be the era of American greatness. In its magnificent domain of space and time, the nation of many nations is destined to manifest to mankind the excellence of divine principles" (O'Sullivan, September 29, 2004). This project of "the great nation of futurity," willed by God and furthered by the existence of open land, will ultimately lead to the "universality of freedom and equality." This God-willed nation, like the utopia that Jefferson envisions, is dependent on the existence of the frontier.

More recently the discourse of the frontier myth haunts popular representations of the Internet. Critic Howard Rheingold is one of the most outspoken champions of the Internet as a frontier of freedom that can create bridges between cultures and foster a more utopian society. He employs this version of the frontier myth in the title of his 1993 book, The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier. He writes, "I have written this book to help inform a wider population about the potential importance of cyberspace to political liberties and the ways virtual communities are likely to change our experience of the real world, as individuals and communities" (Rheingold 2001: 275). As he writes of these online communities or "colonies of enthusiasts," he can hardly contain his enthusiasm for the Internet (Rheingold 2001: 276). When describing his interactions with Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link (WELL), a global virtual community, Rheingold exclaims,

> Not only do I inhabit my virtual communities; to the degree that I carry around their conversations in my head and begin to mix it up with them in real life, my virtual communities also inhabit my life. I've been colonized; my sense of family at the most fundamental level has been virtualized. (Rheingold 2001: 280)

But Rheingold fears the intrusions of "big power and big money" into these virtual colonies/communities. We must, he says, "make sure this new sphere of vital human discourse remains open to citizens of the planet before the political and economic big boys seize it" (Rheingold 2001: 275).

In "A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace," written in 1996, Electronic Frontier Foundation founder, John Perry Barlow, like Thomas Jefferson before him, denounces those who infringe upon the rights of "online colonists" (Barlow, September 29, 2004). Like a messenger from the future, he writes, "Governments of the Industrial World, you weary giants of flesh and steel, I come from Cyberspace, the new home of Mind. On behalf of the future, I ask you of the past to leave us alone…You have no sovereignty where we gather." Perpetuating the idea that the Internet is not a part of the material world as typically defined, he adds, "Cyberspace does not lie within your borders. Do not think that you can build in it, as though it were a public construction project…Ours is a world that is both everywhere and nowhere, but it is not where bodies live." This is a new world where, "Your legal concepts of property, expression, identity, movement, and context do not apply to us. They are all based on matter, and there is no matter here." Barlow describes the on-going project of creating a utopian world without racial, economic, or cultural prejudice and without the horrors of war. He concludes by appearing to echo O'Sullivan and other supporters of Manifest Destiny: "We will spread ourselves across the Planet so that no one can arrest our thoughts. We will create a civilization of the Mind in Cyberspace. May it be more humane and fair than the world your governments have made before."

One could discredit Barlow's remarks as a relic of the 1960s.[4] That assertion might be credible if not for the work of Bill Gates who, in the introduction to The Road Ahead claims that

> …we stand at the brink of another revolution. This one will involve unprecedentedly[5] inexpensive communication; all the computers will join together to communicate with us and for us. Interconnected globally, they will form a network, which is

being called the information highway...I think we may be about to witness the realization of Adam Smith's ideal market, at last. (Gates, Myhrvold, and Rinearson 1995: 3-4)

This realization was reached by the hard work of many dedicated pioneers, himself included. He describes his own willingness to brook social norms by dropping out of Harvard to become an entrepreneur. Gates also includes in his self-mythologizing narrative the long hours he and Paul Allen dedicated to working on the development of Microsoft's groundbreaking contributions to the PC.

Gates connects the on-going rush to create the infrastructure to support the Internet to the Gold Rush (Gates 1995: 227). Governments, he claims, need to deregulate communications, rather than create more controls, in order to assist in this new "Gold Rush" (Gates 1995: 232). He insists this is of paramount importance because the development of the physical network that will carry the Internet has global economic implications: "Countries that move boldly and in concert with each other will enjoy economic rewards. Whole new markets will emerge, and a myriad new opportunities for employment will be created" (Gates 1995: 251). The creation of this network also has important cultural significance, similar to those posited by Rheingold and Barlow. Gates believes in the potential of the Internet to create a more utopian world. He claims that "[T]he information highway is going to break down boundaries and may promote a world culture" (Gates 1995: 263). People will be able to communicate with each other in ways they never could before. They will be free; their world will be open. He concludes, "I think it's a wonderful time to be alive. There have never been so many opportunities to do things that were impossible before" (Gates 1995: 276).

For one of the richest men in the world, it must be a wonderful time to be alive! One is reminded that in the late 19th century telegraph wires and railroads sliced through Native American lands. For them—and many others at the same time—there was little real access to these new communication technologies despite their presence. The communications gap is nothing new. But like many champions of the Internet, Gates pays lip service to some of the hidden problems that this space creates, most notably the widening gap between those who have access to computers and those who do not—the digital divide. Gates's own philanthropic efforts, particularly his efforts to bring PC's to public libraries, have centered on bridging this divide. And, in the process, he creates new customers. In this light, Microsoft's motto, "a computer on every desk and in every home" sounds like a slogan for a colonization effort (Gates 1995: 4). The digital divide dilemma brings up serious questions. Does the right to property include the right of everyone to have a presence in cyberspace? What happens if people are excluded from this frontier? Finally, should the colonizing of this space be regulated at all?

Strange Voices in the Garden

In the 2003 film, "Open Range," [6] two gun-toting cowboys played by Robert Duvall and Kevin Costner are forced to reckon with a bullying rancher named Baxter, hell bent on keeping these cowboys—free-grazers as they are called—and their cattle off his property. In the culminating "high noon" showdown the townsfolk are forced to take sides with either the rich landowner or the idealistic cowboys whose time is coming to an end. Of course, they opt for the latter and come out victorious. In the aftermath, the townsfolk clean up and the cowboys ride into the sunset to sell their cattle as they announce that they'll return to the frontier settlement and open a saloon together. They recognize that the freedom of the open range has come to an end and it is time to settle, to claim a space for themselves.

But these two cowboys were never, technically, free. The frontier upon which they free-grazed their cattle was under the supervision of the U.S. government and before that it was the territory of Native Americans. The U.S. takeover was brutal as even Turner acknowledges: "The farmers met Indians with guns" (Turner 1962: 13). Like the open range of the frontier, communication on the Internet is also controlled. It is not free. It is controlled for reasons related to the need to monitor commerce and property as well as to the need to control cultural and political differences—to keep the outsider at bay. Jefferson notes that controlling the growth of the U.S., and ultimately how the frontier is settled, is imperative for maintaining the union:

It is for the happiness of those united in society to harmonize as much as possible in matters which they must of necessity transact together. Civil government being the sole object of forming societies, its administration must be conducted by common consent (Jefferson 1999: 91).

Immigrants who come from monarchies will import ideologies which the U.S. wishes to cast off. Conversely, if these immigrants do indeed cast off these ideologies they may be "exchange[d] for an unbounded licentiousness… They will infuse into it their spirit, warp and bias its direction, and render it a heterogeneous, incoherent, distracted mass" (Jefferson 1999: 91). Jefferson repeats this sentiment in Query XIII: "The time to guard against corruption and tyranny, is before they shall have gotten hold of us. It is better to keep the wolf out of the fold, than to trust to drawing his teeth and talons after he shall have entered" (Jefferson 1999: 127). Jefferson proposes a slow increase in the population of the U.S. in order to make the government "more homogeneous, more peaceable, more durable" and ultimately, in his mind, the frontier and the nation would be safer (Jefferson 1999: 91). The country should not be in a rush to expand as there is plenty "of land to waste as we please" (Jefferson 1999: 92).

The potential instability and danger of frontier communities is a common theme in 19th century American literature. In the 1978 novel Wieland or, The Transformation: An American Tale, Charles Brockden Brown depicts an idyllic community on the edge of the wilderness that must contend with its own sort of "immigrant," an outsider named Carwin. This outsider speaks many languages and has no visible community. When he enters the story he is described by Clara Wieland as a "stranger" who appears in "the garb of a rustic" (Brown 2002: 66). But this "stranger" is actually an old acquaintance of Henry Pleyel, a member of the community. Pleyel met Carwin in Spain where Carwin had adopted the "habits of a Spaniard" even though he was, as we learn later, born in America (Brown 2002: 69). But Pleyel's "strange" friend Carwin has a talent that eventually causes great harm; he is a ventriloquist and can mimic the voices of others. It is believed by some that this "double-tongued deceiver" uses his talent to frighten the community and plunge Clara's brother Theodore into a moment of temporary insanity in which he murders his wife and children (Brown 2002: 233). He does so because he believes that he has received the word of God. Brown writes that, "This scene of havock was produced by an illusion of the senses" (Brown 2002: 223). Elizabeth Jane Wall Hinds notes that Theodore Wieland's "literal interpretation of the voice he hears is, unfortunately for him, in turn interpreted as madness: the court decides that his report of supernatural agency brands him as lunatic" (Brown 2002: 116).

One interpretation of Wieland is that the voice of the outsider who enters into this utopian rural community instigates madness. From another vantage point, Wieland's madness is the result of internal lapses. Brown courts such ambiguity for it raises potentially difficult questions. Keeping the wolf at bay is feasible—the frontier can be patrolled and immigration regulated—but the internal life of the subject cannot, especially when he or she is so far from "civilization." Brown seems to wonder aloud about the potential consequences of democracy; the lonely wilderness frontier becomes a place of danger and potentially disastrous consequences for the new nation. In Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown" the wilderness is also a place to be feared with sounds and voices that cannot be trusted: "The whole forest was peopled with frightful sounds; the creaking of the trees, the howling of wild beasts, and the yell of Indians" (Hawthorne 1985: 1041). The existence of such voices should, as Brown puts it, cause us to, "Hold!" We must be aware of the potential dangers to civilization that exist on the frontier and protect ourselves, all the while being vigilant of the dangers that lurk within.

In The American Democrat Cooper expresses concern over the multiplicity of voices in the new nation. Involved in numerous libel actions throughout his lifetime, his particular concern is with the abundance of periodicals. Cooper worries that too many voices—communication that is too free—will send the U.S. into a state of disarray and subvert its unity. He writes, "The admixture of truth and falsehood in the intelligence circulated by the press is one of the chief causes of its evils" (Cooper 1956: 130). There are, according to Cooper, too many opinions expressed by too many people. What has been created is a "government of opinion…which blindly yields its interests to the designs of those who would rule through the instrumentality of newspapers" (Cooper 1836: 131). He concludes, "As the press of this country now exists, it would seem to be expressly devised by the great agent of mischief, to depress and destroy all that is good, and to elevate all that is evil in the nation" (Cooper 1956: 132).

Because the Internet fosters the blending of cultures and, beyond that, easy access to information, many have become concerned. Will it allow dangerous voices to intrude into our culture and influence American politics and cultural attitudes? Will it allow for the theft of private property? Should it be regulated? One could argue that the Internet has always been regulated and controlled. The first computer network, the Advanced Research Projects Agency Network, or ARPAnet, was created in 1969 to allow for better communication amongst U.S. Department of Defense offices. This network was based on a Rand Corporation model for de-centralized communication in the event of a nuclear war. Thus, the territory was explored and settled years before Barlow's Electronic Frontier Foundation cried, "Foul!" and years before Carwin-like outsiders such as al Quaeda and child pornographers began

their own explorations of the Internet frontier.

And so the view of this new frontier as a utopian space where democratic public discourse reigns is false. It is hardly such a place. Michael Totty of The Wall Street Journal writes, "If the early cyberspace was a separate frontier, outside the reach of governments and laws, it's now beginning to look more like a later version of the Old West—the one where settlers, marshals, and lawyers come in and impose law and order" (Totty 2003). He notes the recent entertainment copyright scandals and government efforts to end online gambling and control content. When a frontier emerges it is domesticated, made safe for commerce and "polite" society. According to Totty, "Courts and governments from New York to Washington to Beijing already are treating cyberspace like any other place within their jurisdictions. During last year's legislative session [2002], more than 400 bills seek to govern some aspect of the Net were introduced in Congress…" Even more intrusive than legislation are government-owned computer programs like the Central Intelligence Agency's "Carnivore" which can tap into a user's email account via Internet Service Providers' computers. The FBI has its own program called Cyber-Knight which serves a similar function. These programs have not gone unnoticed by advocates of free speech.

Media critics argue that many of the structures that limit freedom of discourse in the land of brick and mortar do the same in cyberspace. Lawrence Lessig believes that greater governmental and commercial control of the Internet will limit the freedom of users and cyberspace will be drained of its potential. He writes, "always and everywhere, free resources have been crucial to innovation and creativity…in the digital age, the central question becomes not whether government or the market should control a resource, but whether a resource should be controlled at all" (Lessig 2001: 14). He continues, "Just as we are beginning to see the power that free resources produce, changes in the architecture of the Internet—both legal and technical—are sapping the Internet of this power" (Lessig 2001: 15). Lessig's focus is on governmental and legal limitations to the freedom of cyberspace, while Alexander Galloway focuses on the technical limitations on this freedom—limitations that prohibit the free use of space. Galloway argues that the Internet is perhaps the most controlled environment that has ever existed because of standardized programming protocols that assert a hierarchy over computer operations on the Internet—how computers communicate with each other. "Protocol is a type of controlling logic that operates outside institutional, governmental, and corporate power, although it has important ties to all three" (Galloway 2004: 244). One of the most important protocols, which gives users and Internet Service Providers (ISPs) access to domains names, combines the power of programming protocol and a semi-governmental organization called the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) into a regulating body that exerts immense power over the Internet. Various and unique voices are entering the garden, but the space they have in this new frontier is coming under greater scrutiny and regulation.

Homesteading a Controlled Space

The Homestead Act of 1862 was essentially a way for the U.S. government to settle the interior of the continent by putting more than over 270 million acres of land into the public domain. In order to stake a claim on this land, all someone had to do was build a house and cultivate some part of it, remaining there for at least five years. This proposal, Henry Nash Smith notes, was not for speculators or squatters; it was for laborers who would work the soil, for those who could prove themselves (Smith 1950: 170). The Homestead Act was Jefferson's ideal realized— yeoman farmers establishing utopian agricultural-based communities on the plains. Thus the act was not only an attempt to populate the mid-section of the country; it was an attempt to establish order and unity. The Homestead Act was announced after decades of work to establish a more united country, both geographically and ideologically. This should come as no surprise given the debate over slavery at the same time. Smith quotes William H. Seward demanding the admission of California in 1850 on grounds that the West should, "…meet again and mingle with the declining civilization of the East on our own free soil, and a new and more perfect civilization will arise to bless the earth…" (Smith 1950: 166). Settling the frontier, for Seward, is wrapped up in a vision of a more perfect nation and, certainly, free markets.

The Homestead Act was, in some respects, a failure. Of the land offered, the best lands ended up in the hands of speculators and railroads. "Railways alone," writes Smith, "…sold more land at an average price of five dollars an acre than was conveyed under the Homestead Act" (Smith 1950: 190). Freedom was declared but curtailed because this pioneering project was one engineered by the U.S. government. The Homestead Act spoke to the limitless possibilities of the frontier but was, in actuality, a method to control space.

On the Internet frontier, settlers stake claims by giving themselves an address, a domain name. The word "domain" has its roots in the word "demesne," meaning possession or ownership. Therefore, "domain name" implies a name for something that is possessed or owned like a space or property. The names for Internet properties are controlled by a protocol called the Domain Name System (DNS). DNS is, in essence, a database connecting network addresses—which appear as a series of numbers—to network names— which appear as "www-dot's." Alexander Galloway explains that,

> in order to visit 'www.rhizome.org' on the Internet one's computer must first translate the name 'www.rhizome.org,' itself geographically vague, into a specific address on the physical network. These specific addresses are written as a series of four numbers like so: 206.252.131.211. (Galloway 2004: 9)

They are also referred to as Internet Protocol or IP addresses. ICANN is responsible for this hierarchical DNS and for accrediting privately run domain name registrars. As part of its duties, ICANN also controls the kinds of suffixes (dot-org, dot-com, dot-edu, etc.) that can exist. The organization claims that its "role is very limited, and it is not responsible for many issues associated with the Internet, such as financial transactions, Internet content control, spam (unsolicited commercial email), Internet gambling, or data protection and privacy" (ICANN). One might dispute ICANN's assertion that its role is "limited." It is responsible for the DNS, a system that allocates the right to distribute "property" on the Internet. This organization controls the territory of the Internet, distributes property, and, with U.S. backing, lays claim to the frontier.

ICANN's mission statement claims its purpose is "to operate as an open, transparent, a consensus-based body that is broadly representative of the diverse stakeholder communities of the global Internet" (www.icann. org, September 29, 2004). This non-profit has come under increased opposition by media activists around the world who suggest that ICANN is anything but "transparent." Suspicion exists because ICANN was created at the behest of the U.S. Department of Commerce. The process of making ICANN a self-sustaining entity is underway, but many argue that its claims of diversity and internationalization are unfounded and that an Internet regulating body, if one exists at all, should be associated with the United Nations, not the United States.[7] Calls for a UN led organization were heard at last year's World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva but were met by much resistance from policymakers in Washington.

Why all the fuss? The naming of space on the Internet is actually quite significant given the number of people who are online. Domain names serve as portals to websites that have important private and public functions. Websites serve as resumes, commercial hubs, and entertainment centers. More important, the information a website contains can be seen by anyone who has access to the Internet. In 2002, the Christian fundamentalist preacher Jerry Falwell sued Gary Cohn for creating a satirical website that used the domain names www. jerryfallwell.com and www.jerryfalwell.com. Charges of trademark violations and libel, or, as one brief put it, "domain name hijacking," were filed in U.S. District Court in Virginia. These charges were ultimately dismissed on grounds that the court lacked jurisdiction over the case. In 2003, a new complaint was filed with a dispute resolution panel against Network Solutions, Inc., an ICANN accredited domain name registrar. Falwell's complaint was that the address www.fallwell.com[8] was registered—in "bad faith" and "out of anger" toward Falwell—with Network Solutions and was being used to re-direct potential visitors to his website. The panel ruled in Fallwell's favor and charged Network Solutions of "typosquatting" and ordered that the domain name be "transferred" over to Falwell (www.arbforum.com, September 29, 2004). The site still exists, but it is likely that Falwell will file charges in Federal court in the near future.

Many programmers argue that the way to keep the Internet free and "open" is to place programming source-code in the public domain. In this way, large corporations will not be able to control the ground upon which the Internet develops. In his essay, "The Cathedral and the Bazaar," Eric S. Raymond promotes the open source ideology discussed earlier. He believes that open source is the answer to all the bugs, or problems, that arise with most software. Raymond says this is because of the governing principles of open-source, what he calls, "Linus's Law" (named after Linus Torvalds)—"Given enough eyeballs, all bugs are shallow" (Raymond 1999: 30). In other words, if people collaborate to create software it will have fewer mistakes. The source-code of software must be kept public so that users can improve it. The downside of this is that it could create some sticky copyright battles.

Raymond asserts that the current structure of the Internet is based upon the highly regulated structure of a cathedral as opposed to what he desires, which would look more like a bazaar. The cathedral model is hierarchical and is fostered by large corporations and governments who seek to centralize service and content and even to

protect the public from unwanted and sometimes dangerous "outsiders." Most of us welcome certain intrusions from a protective authority, of course, but the question is where should the line be drawn? Witness the ongoing debates around copyright (Napster, Gnutella), the ability of the U.S. government to force ISPs not to host certain sites, and the creation of media conglomerates that drown out the voices of smaller interests. Then again, if this free-space, this frontier, has since its inception been regulated by the government, any public outcry from "the homesteaders" is a waste of time. The Internet frontier never actually existed.

But did the frontier ever exist except as ideology? As soon as Europeans landed on the shores of the Americas, they began to describe what they saw—and kill those with a competing discourse. It is fitting to note how often European settlers gave names to those geographic features they encountered as they progressed across the continent, disregarding the names given them by Native Americans. This naming was also included in numerous treaties, surveys, and legal titles—technologies of ownership and settlement necessary for laying claim to the frontier. Richard Slotkin writes,

> It is by now a commonplace that our adherence to the 'myth of the frontier'—the conception of America as a wide-open land of unlimited opportunity for the strong, ambitious, self-reliant individual to thrust his way to the top—has blinded us to the consequences of the industrial and urban revolutions and to the need for social reform and a new concept of individual and communal welfare (Slotkin 1996: 5).

Ultimately most visions of the frontier could not compete with industrial and governmental control. Part of the myth of the frontier is the vision of freedom, even when that vision is inherently rooted in a falsehood. It was never free. An Internet or communications frontier will never exist, and perhaps never has, because the Internet is rooted in conceptions of space and ownership of space that are guided by legal documents—including the U.S. Constitution—which give Americans the right to own space and the U.S. government permission to protect that space. Major social transformation would have to occur and a more communal understanding of property come into being, if we are to ever have a true frontier. Note what happened when outer space was announced as the "final frontier": NASA astronauts landed on the moon and planted a flag.

The American myth of the frontier is tied to a drive to create, to go forth, to become, to make and do. This drive is fueled by a desire for something new and an opposition to constraint. Reaching the new lands of the frontier, then, is about entering the land of the free. When Huck Finn is faced with the prospect of being constrained, of being "sivilized" by Aunt Salley, he declares, "…I reckon I got to light out for the territory ahead of the rest…" (Twain 1885: 279). Like Huck, many believe that if they explore the frontier they will be free and their lives will be better. The frontier, the "newest thing," will provide liberty, peace, and prosperity. This fantasy of freedom informs the discourse about the Internet. In reality the frontier exists to be regulated, controlled, and sold back to us for a profit.

Endnotes

1. Throughout this essay I will use the term Internet to signify not only the communications network that fosters the use of email but also the World Wide Web. It is a measure of simplification given that some of the critics I discuss, such as Howard Rheingold, did not use the term "World Wide Web" in their more important texts written in the early 1990s.

2. The notion that the Internet is rooted in physical space is painfully apparent to urban teenagers waiting for hours to gain web access at community libraries, to developing nations desiring digital networks, and to victims of cyber-crimes.

3. See McLure, Helen. "The Wild, Wild Web: The Mythic American West and the Electronic Frontier."

Western Historical Quarterly, Winter (2000): 457 - 475.

4. Barlow was at one time a lyricist for the Grateful Dead.

5. Gates' word, or that of his editor, is not recognized as grammatically correct by the Microsoft Word program.

6. The film was shot in Alberta, Canada on Stoney Indian Reservation.

7. The frontier of cyberspace has also been "claimed" in other ways by the U.S., for example, through the establishment of English as the lingua franca of the web-this despite the widely held myth of the Internet as global village.

8. On a recent attempt to enter this site, I was diverted to a satirical site www.fartwell.com. The ability of web activists, law enforcement agencies, and corporations to intercept individual attempts to visit a site raises some interesting questions.

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Politics and Self in the Age of Digital (Re)producibility

Robert W. Williams

Globalization is very much about individuals and freedom—a claim all the more reinforced by some politicians in the face of international terrorism. Freedom, often framed as the capacity to think and act autonomously, is an essential characteristic of the individual in many liberal-democratic and neo-classical economic theories. The globalization of liberal-democratic values and market principles, it is often asserted, brings with it a bright future for individuals around the world and their freedoms. But, as this work argues, globalization does not necessarily yield all of thepositive consequences so loudly heralded for individuality.

The individual in Western philosophical and political theories, especially after René Descartes, is theorized as the discrete self. That is to say, the essential part of the individual is the self, the unique and fundamentally autonomous entity in Western value systems. As analyzed by various conventional Western social sciences, the self is fundamental to our humanity: it is how we organize our personal experiences and it is the basis for our reflexive action in the world. In economics, the self is the agent of instrumentally rational decision-making. In political science, the self can be defined as the citizen who participates via voting or other political activities. In legal analysis, the self is the agent who is ultimately responsible for his/her behavior within society.

Common to the dominant conceptions of the individual self in Western social sciences are its distinctive properties of naturalness and non-reducibility. Such characteristics derive from the dominant Western values out of which the social sciences emerged, such as the social contract theories of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke and the works of the Scottish Enlightenment by Adam Smith and Bernard Mandeville (see Smith 1997). In liberal-democratic polities the citizen is the entity with selfhood and its attendant inalienable rights. In a market economy, the individual is the optimizer of costs and benefits in his/her interests and accordingly is "self-contained," i.e., the only one capable of so ascertaining personal interests. Certainly, the formation of the self is studied with regard to larger social(izing) processes, especially with regard to its subjectivity (i.e., a content of the self, like identity). For example, theoretical frameworks like! symbolic interactionism consider that the self is formed in relation to others in society (see Sandstrom et al. 2001). The self, nevertheless, retains its aura of authenticity and its irreducible sanctity—that is, its putative individuality—in many Western value systems.

It is just such irreducibility and authenticity of the individual self that this work tackles. I seek to advance the argument made by Gilles Deleuze through his concept of the "dividual"—a physically embodied human subject that is endlessly divisible and reducible to data representations via the modern technologies of control, like computer-based systems. I offer an immanent critique of the self, specifically focusing on the relationship between the self and digital technology. Such technology is crucial to globalization, and points towards the Internet and its cyberspaces as the terrain ultimately to be examined in this paper.

Deleuze offers us a conceptual point of departure. His notion of the dividual grasps a vital part of the dynamics of modern technology: the intersection of human agency and high-technology in the constitution of selves. Deleuze allows us to extend the analysis of individuality derived from such thinkers as Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno in Dialectic of Enlightenment (1973), Erich Fromm in Escape from Freedom (1965), and Herbert Marcuse in One-Dimensional Man (1964). With a concept of dividuality we can address the complexity of a global(izing) society with is characteristic digital forms of communication and its cyberspaces. Hence, Deleuze's concept will be theoretically

extended.

The paper advances a central theme: there is a dialectic of in/dividuality present in the conjuncture of globalizing capitalism and liberal-democratic policies. The relationships that reduce us as separate selves to digitally mediated signifiers and that "reproduce" those signifiers as dividuals also provide the potential for resistance against the oppressions resulting from digital re(pro)ducibility. Specifically, the very digitality that engenders oppression also gives rise to, and facilitates the practices of, new forms of opposition to the globalizing forces themselves. Accordingly, we also will have the opportunity to exercise reason in the promotion of the social good. We might be able thereby to practice the autonomy of reason so often touted in traditional conceptions of individuality. Herein the dynamics of in/dividuality will be examined with regard to cyberspace, at once a digitally created environment of the Internet as well as a vital terrain of resistance in the 21st century.

Certainly, many have theorized the effects and consequences of digital technology on humans and society. The rise of digital communications and automation has generated analyses gushing with optimistic forecasts. In keeping with this paper's focus on Internet-related technologies, we find the following included among the suggested advantages: the efficient provision of government services, the ease of conducting commerce, the creation of new communities, and the enhancement of communication across political borders and physical distance (e.g., see Bowman 2003; Negroponte 1995; Tsagarousianou et al. 1998; Weare et al. 1999). There are, however, also somber analyses filled with pessimistic conclusions about cyberpolitics. Such include arguments that Internet communities do not replicate the old-style public spaces of democracy, that human isolation and parochialism of views can be reinforced, and that political deliberation is weakened via cyberpolitics (e.g., Goldberg 1999; Ornstein 2000; Saco 2002; Sunstein 2001).

My analysis attempts to thread its way between the extreme cases. How should we theorize the emancipatory potentials of the Internet in the service of struggles against various forms of oppression (whether racial, class, gender, ableist, sexual, etc.)? As such, the paper sets forth the conditions for the positive use of cyberspace and cyber-activism, while also enumerating some of the crucial structural constraints on such activism.

To pursue such emancipatory goals I ground my analysis squarely within the Marxian tradition, especially within its broad Western strand. In particular, I utilize immanent critique as my central methodological tool. Immanent critique is a dialectical approach to social inquiry associated with the so-called Frankfurt School (Jay 1973; Morrow 1994; Wiggershaus 1995). Immanent critique as a tool evaluates a taken-for-granted phenomenon or concept with reference to the social preconditions that constitute it. As such, immanent critique will seek to explore the underlying assumptions as well as any contradictions between the concept or phenomenon, on the one hand, and the reality of its manifestations, on the other (see, for example, Antonio 1981; Morrow 1994). To quote Max Horkheimer, immanent critique relates

> social institutions and activities to the values they themselves set forth as their standards and ideals. .... If subjected to such an analysis, the social agencies most representative of the present pattern of society will disclose a pervasive discrepancy between what they actually are and the values they accept. To take an example, the media of public communication, radio, press, and film, constantly profess their adherence to the individual's ultimate value and his inalienable freedom, but they operate in such a way that they tend to foreswear such values by fettering the individual to prescribed attitudes, thoughts, and buying habits. (Horkheimer 1989: 265).

Immanent critique, in brief, seeks to discover the taken-for-granted aspects of a theoretical or ideological position and thereby bring to light their implications and consequences for the life chances of humans.

My self-positioning within the Western Marxist tradition is quite evident also in the value placed, implicitly or explicitly, on the reasoned agency of humans in the struggles against social oppressions. Humans and human identity are not the unitary, rational, self-evident selves conceptualized by the Enlightenment. But neither are humans mere conscious-less objects to be tossed about by larger, impersonal forces. Indeed, humans can be "sutured" together with different and potentially conflicting claims on identity (Laclau and Mouffe 1985). Such, nevertheless, does not foreclose the capacity of humans to reason, act, and organize into societies; in short, human have the potential to discover, deliberate, and create common values and shared goals.

Problematizing the Individuality of the Self

How distinctly and utterly "individual" is the self? This is a salient question in a world of ever-globalizing capitalism with its forces that affect our daily lives, and thereby exert influence on our selves. The conceptual boundaries that

constitute the putative distinctiveness of our individuality are affected by the marketing and targeting of our selves as consumers of goods and services. Nowadays, marketing is not only directed as the "masses" but also includes the "niche-targeting" of consumers. Mass marketing involves the advertisement of consumer goods to all people as a more-or-less undifferentiated mass (albeit in terms of some distinctions, e.g., advertisements for gender-specific clothing in gender-related venues). Information is not gathered for specific consumers; rather, advertisements are presented "spectacularly" for people to view or hear. Niche targeting, however, locates those consumers that might "want" particular products or particular brands of products (Klein 2000). This requires that data will be gathered, stored, and analyzed—processes facilitated by the expansion of new digital technologies.

To promote the pursuit of our "individual" desires, our demographic information is gathered into data banks, our Internet surfing preferences are stored as "cookies" that we accept when visiting Web sites, and our grocery purchases are monitored at check-outs so as to yield coupons on related items for later use. Such actions are trumpeted as positive. They make our consumption more efficient because relevant goods and services are proffered for sale, are displayed for easier selection, or are offered for edification and entertainment. So-called "personalization technologies" are common (Negroponte 1995): Amazon.com suggests other books to buy based on what books we key in as search terms, and TiVo tapes TV and cable shows for later viewing based on previous shows watched by the subscriber (Zaslow 2002). Certainly, numerous advertisements shout out how "we can have it our way." If we believe the hype, there has never been a better time for our selves and our unique individualities.

Individuality is also the rallying cry of liberal-democratic governments charged with preserving societal order, national security, and the personal liberties of individuals. The latter are broadly inclusive of a varied mixture of civil and political freedoms as well as the rights to property and to privacy. The violence to individuality emerges when considering how both socio-political order/security and personal liberties are implemented in practice. Surveillance has been a major means used by governmental institutions both to secure societal order and to protect the safety of individuals (Lyon 1994). Surveillance includes not only observation, but also record keeping of the information gathered. Over time, government surveillance has increased as a response to major societal disruptions like civil unrest, economic depression, and wars. Most recently surveillance has been amplified after the September 11th terrorist acts. But when viewed historically, such increases in government surveillance are also part of trend that intensified in the wake of policy reforms which institutionalized the so-called managerial state and its welfare-state variant of the post-World War II capitalism (Lyon 1994).

As many mainstream pundits might argue, compromises often must be struck between the extremes of societal order and individuality. Nonetheless, problems have emerged when the same management techniques and values used by government agencies in the interests of managing a capitalist economy system (e.g., efficiency pursued via instrumentally rational means) are likewise used to manage the citizens. In such instances individuals are paternalistically administered as "clients" of a system that denies them some of the supposed autonomy of a sovereign self. Moreover, governmental policies to support social order can potentially threaten individuality, especially in its senses of civil and political freedoms and of privacy. For example, critics of the administration of U.S. President George W. Bush hold that it is not maintaining the proper protections of individual civil liberties and privacy in its war against global terrorism (Amnesty International 2002; Chang 2001; Cole and Dempsey 2002; Katyal 2001; Lyon 2001). As a practical consequence, social and political dissent, even peaceful forms of protest, against hegemonic values and practices has been, is being, and will continue to be, surveiled in the interests of order.

Thus we must ask: how individual is the self when it too is marketed and targeted by government organizations? How autonomous, sacrosanct, and centered is the individual when autonomy is defined as choosing from pre-selected political or consumer choices? When we are buffeted by multiple claims on our identity (such as the particularity of nationalism which can contravene the universals of humanitarianism)? When pandering to our psychological and physical fears are central features of marketing (whether for political or corporate campaigns)? When material inequities diminish our capacity to achieve our highest aspirations (aspirations which themselves are often defined in terms of buying consumer goods)? All such questions interrogate the pre-given naturalness of monadic conceptions of individuals and thereby point us to the social construction of the content of what makes us individuals.

To criticize individuality as everywhere influenced by larger social forces and thereby "unnatural" is not to abandon agency by a socially engaged self. Many attacks have been launched against the presumed individualism at the heart of our socio-economic order, including its consumer sovereignty. Certainly, the individual self as a foundational, stable subjectivity with its hetero-normative, masculinist, and elitist biases has been criticized as a construct of Western philosophy from a variety of structuralist, Marxist, poststructuralist, and feminist perspectives

(see, e.g., Althusser 1971; Foucault 1978; Harding 1995; Rich 1986). Nonetheless, I wish to preserve a notion of self / selves so as to retain a way to theorize human agency in the world.

Agency refers to that capacity of our selves to act reflexively, meaningfully, and responsibly, if not always effectively or efficiently (Barnes 2001). Agency is integral to our selves, whether we accept the Marxian tenet that we make history but not always as we want, or follow the Sartrean existentialist dictum that we must always choose to act because we are never free to do otherwise. Wherever and whenever we go, there and then we are and do—knitted together as we may be with multiple, interwoven, and overlapping identities and claims to identities. Our selves embody agency in social space and time, and are evinced as disembodied avatars in the virtual realms of cyberspace.

Technology and human agency are intertwined historically; or we can argue that human agency is technologically mediated. We humans create tools and technological systems to do our intentional and conscious bidding. As de Beauvoir wrote, technology helps us to distinguish ourselves from each other and from the environment (de Beauvoir 1972). Moreover, our selves express (moral) agency in how we use technology and for what ends—and in some cases, how we choose not to use some technologies, like weapons of torture and destruction. As mediation, technology however is not without its shaping influences on human life chances, as I discuss later.

Technology promises new ways to act and be human, especially in the digital realms of cyberspace. But before elaborating on those possibilities let me first explore the problematic aspects of technology as a mediation of human agency.

Deleuze's Concept of the "Dividual"

A prolific social theorist and philosopher, Gilles Deleuze sought new ways to theorize the potential for emancipation in an epoch where neither the proletariat nor the bourgeoisie were the historical agents of liberation (see Patton 2001). In his short, suggestive essay, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," Deleuze sets forth his analysis of how we are controlled by technologies (Deleuze 1992). He continues Michel Foucault's project begun in such works as Discipline and Punish (Foucault 1978).

Foucault's disciplinary societies employed technologies, like factory assembly lines or hospital organizational structures, that physically placed people in time and space. By so doing, such institutional arrangements controlled their people. With reference to the panopticon, an architecture of surveillance discussed by Jeremy Bentham, Foucault wrote:

> Power has its principle not so much in a person as in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes; in an arrangement whose internal mechanisms produce the relation in which individuals are caught up. [....] So [with the panopticon] it is not necessary to use force to constrain the convict to good behaviour, the madman to calm, the worker to work, the schoolboy to application, the patient to the observation of the regulations. [....] He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection. (Foucault 1978: III.3)

Such an embodied practice of the disciplinary societies was reinforced in everyday life via what Foucault termed panopticism (Foucault 1980). He held that many people tend to conform to hegemonic norms in their everyday activities and relationships because of the interiorization of such norms via the presence of the gaze.

Deleuze argued that the technologies of disciplinary societies are being replaced with technology of a decidedly different type. Close-circuit television (CCTV) and computer monitoring software "scrutinize" our movements and interactions with others and with numerous electronic network interfaces (see also Lyon 1994). Other cases can be offered: the monitoring of computer use and key strokes in the workplace, the CCTV surveillance of traffic infractions, and the spy satellites which orbit the earth. Even Hollywood movies like "Enemy of the State" depict the use and abuse of technologies of control.

Such technologies can permit or deny entry through access points, as well as allow or disallow financial transactions at automated teller machines. Wrote Deleuze:

> The conception of a control mechanism, giving the position of any element within an open environment at any given instant (whether animal in a reserve or human in a corporation, as with an electronic collar), is not necessarily one of science fiction. Felix Guattari has imagined a city where one would be able to leave one's apartment, one's street, one's neighborhood,

thanks to one's (dividual) electronic card that raises a given barrier; but the card could just as easily be rejected on a given day or between certain hours; what counts is not the barrier but the computer that tracks each person's position—licit or illicit—and effects a universal modulation. (Deleuze 1992: section 3)

Technologies that open closed doors for us can just as easily keep them shut. Freedom and repression emanate from the same machines.

For Deleuze, the data gathered on us through the new technologies did not necessarily manifest our irreducible uniqueness. Rather, the very way that the data can be gathered about us and then used for and against us marks us as dividuals. Deleuze wrote (1992): "The numerical language of control is made of codes that mark access to information, or reject it. [....] Individuals have become 'dividuals' and masses [have become] samples, data, markets, or 'banks.'" For Deleuze, such technologies indicate that we as discrete selves are not in-divisible entities; on the contrary, we can be divided and subdivided endlessly. What starts as particular information about specific people— our selves—can be separated from us and recombined in new ways outside of our control. Such "recombinations" are based on the criteria deemed salient by those with access to the information, be they government officials or corporate marketeers. We live now, Deleuze held, within societies of control.

How can we be deemed individual (in its irreducible and autonomous sense of agency) when we are divided into those with and without access. The very notion of individuality itself implies that actors are not only entitled to, but also capable of, effecting their will on the world. Access to resources—and the material social relations that are implicated therein—is thus the prerequisite for the practices and Western philosophical discourses that constitute the core an individual. Indeed, the early thinkers in the social contract tradition (like Thomas Hobbes and John Locke) considered in varying ways how the survival of embodied selves in a hypothetical state of nature faced dangers insofar as a government did not secure the rights of property deemed so basic to the existence of individuality in the first place.

Dividuality and our Reducible Selves

Here, I provide a dialectical elaboration of Deleuze by focusing on two facets of "dividuality" that he did not develop in the "Postscript." First, the separation of physical selves from their representation as data offers both negative consequences as well as potentially positive uses for promoting social justice. Second, the individual selves in a mass-market society lose their aura of distinctiveness because the selves are able to be classified (and thereby manipulated) by the very data which are supposed to serve individual needs. Indeed, the manipulation of such information about individuals for marketing purposes highlights how the notion of "consumer sovereignty" is an overblown and contradictory term in an era of advanced globalization.

The processes of dividuality which operate via the technologies of control make distinctions that separate one from the many. But they also include the ways in which we ourselves are sub-divisible. That is, via the data collected on us, the technologies of control can separate who we are and what we are from our physical selves (see Poster 1990). The data become the representations of ourselves within the web of social relations; the data are the signifiers of our discrete preferences and habits. Borrowing from Laudon, such can be called our "data images" (Laudon 1986). Because I am not physically present I am thus reduced to my documented interests and behavior. Complex processes of self formation are thereby reified by a few formulae and data points in some electronic storage facility.

The separation of our selves from our representations illuminates another aspect of dividuality. As data, we are classifiable in diverse ways: we are sorted into different categories, and can be evaluated for different purposes. Are we potential customers or clients? (What have we purchased recently?) Are we a threat to national security? (What is our citizenship or visa status? Are we buying items that could build a bomb?) Our divisibility hence becomes the basis for our classifiability into salient, useful, and even profitable categories for the businesses and government agencies that manipulate the data.

Despite the rhetoric of having "it" our own way, companies typically do not make individual items that will be purchased by only one person. (In a capitalist world economy where is the profit in that?) Over the last several centuries the aura of discrete items has given way to the commonness of their mass production—not only as Walter Benjamin analyzed with regard to art work and mass media content (1969), but also in terms of our everyday items of consumption. For instance, the distinctiveness of a Sunday sit-down dinner made from scratch gives way to a

"sumptuous buffet" as advertised at a local eatery. Choice, thus, tends to be limited to the possibility of selecting from among different styles, colors, and flavors.

A contradiction of modern society is manifested here: the irreducible uniqueness of self, so touted by Western value systems, is actually quite reducible to generalizable preferences (Frankfurt Institute for Social Research 1972; Horkheimer 1989). We are catalogued via a summation of our discrete desires and habits, and we make our consumer choices within a preestablished range of items and their available permutations. The niche targeting of commodities does not negate or lessen the influence of that preestablished set of commodities; indeed, it reinforces the mechanisms and techniques that dividuate us because we can be catalogued by past behaviors and purchases and then solicited in our niche with the "appropriate" marketing inducements to purchase those specific brands (Klein 2000).

As selves subjected to the technologies of control, we are all divisible entities. Nonetheless, the separation of our selves from our representations has a potentially positive dimension that might aid in social resistance. This is most clearly demonstrated in that realm where physicality is separated from its representations—cyberspace. Such a separation illuminates the particular characteristics of "high-tech" communications. In order to frame Deleuze's concept of dividuals as part of an emancipatory project for the 21th century we must theorize how resistance is possible. We should examine not only technology as such but also the specificity of digital technology and its cyberspaces.

Technology and its Social Ramifications

The arguments about the relationship of society and technology as well as the societal effects of technology are long and numerous. This section concentrates on the putative neutrality of technology, a perspective holding that technology is neither inherently good nor bad (see Pitt 2000). I will argue that technology is not neutral as to its effects on humans. Technology forces us to think, act, and live in ways distinctive to it. Whether those ways are deemed good or bad depend on our value systems and the answer to the question of who benefits and loses in economic and political terms. The insights of Benjamin and Adorno will provide the theoretical basis of this section.

As Martin Heidegger wrote in "The Question concerning Technology, modern technology enframes (gestellt) us in ways particular to its rhythms (Heidegger 1977). Modern technology challenges nature and humanity by revealing all to comprise a "standing reserve" (Bestand) which can be bent to human uses. For example, the landscape is disclosed as an open-pit mine, the earth as a repository of ores, and the ores as the source of steel and nuclear energy. Rivers are revealed as a source of hydro-electric power and mountains as challenges calling for the implements of technological progress to overcome the impediments of the peaks.

We do not have to agree with Heidegger's philosophy or his politics to understand the ways that technology can structure our existence. Other frameworks have also evaluated technology in terms of its negative repercussions. Herbert Marcuse, although once a student of Heidegger's, offered a Marxist analysis of technology that analyzes it in terms of an instrumentally rational capitalism. For Marcuse, technology ensnares us in a logic of the instrumental rationality of capitalism, forcing us to calculate according to efficiency and to limit our freedom to measurable choices (Marcuse 1978; but see Marcuse 1969 where he emphasized that oppression resulted, not from technology per se, but rather from how it is used to further capitalist profitability). But is the logic of technology always inherently negative or reactionary?

Some have argued that technology can be used in socially progressive ways. Walter Benjamin analyzed the political implications of the development of media technologies. He examined the effects of reproducibility on the social functioning of art in his famous essay, "The Work of Art in an Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (as the German essay, "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit,"—technical reproducibility— was translated [Benjamin 1969]). Art works such as paintings and sculpture possess an aura due to their uniqueness. Benjamin argued that when technologies like cameras, radio, and other forms of communication technology became more extensive in the 19th century, the aura of art declined or was eroded.

Aura, in Benjamin's analysis, functioned by a simultaneous presencing and distancing. The very presence of the art work bespoke its uniqueness, but by the same token such uniqueness created a distance between the art and its audience. This distance was not specifically or necessarily a distance defined in terms of measurable proximity. Rather, it was a social distance that separated the viewer from art because the art was embedded in a sanctified tradition and hierarchal social relations which framed the art as "great."

Technical reproducibility, Benjamin held, removed the uniqueness of art because it could copy the original as many times as desired. In the physical presence of a reproduction the symbolically reverential distance between item and audience melted away. And with this dissolution of aura came the basis for a demystification of hierarchical and repressive ideologies as well as the increased possibilities for social transformation. Benjamin concluded that the decline of aura under conditions of technical reproducibility meant that radical movements could use art politically against the entrenched power structures.

Benjamin's loose affiliation with the Institute for Social Research did not mean that all members were in accord (Wiggershaus 1995). Not all of Benjamin's fellow theorists accepted his analysis of art in our capitalist technological age. For example, Theodor Adorno criticized Benjamin on at least two points (Adorno 1973, 1978b, 1981; also see, for example, Habermas 1983; Kaufman 2002).

First, Adorno disagreed that the decline of aura was revolutionary in itself. For Adorno some auratic art, or what he called autonomous art (like the sobering literature of Kafka and Baudelaire or the atonal music of Schoenberg), was able to preserve an emancipatory critique precisely because it distanced itself from mass-produced artworks. Indeed, for autonomous/auratic art such a distance meant that the art was not easily commodified and thereby might not become pablum for the masses. Emancipatory potential does not emerge from "mere" technical reproducibility. Rather, for Adorno, it is by identifying the values and visions of the artworks—especially by critically situated theorists—that we understand a liberatory project in terms of the critique offered by the unfulfilled promises "embedded" in the works themselves.

Second, Adorno disagreed with Benjamin on the implications of art directly used in the service of leftist political movements. Adorno argued that Benjamin offered an un-mediated notion of the technologies of reproducibility. In Adorno's view, Benjamin held that the new technologies and their content would lead to revolutionary action and progress. For Adorno, however, such technologies were particularly negative mediations between receivers and senders—that is, between the listeners/viewers and the capitalist firms and government officials. Those technologies functioned in terms of the instrumental rationality that served a late modern capitalist society (Jay 1984: 124). Specifically, the commodity form had become the dominant means by which to efficiently and effectively "produce" artworks and other cultural items. Profitability was emphasized in the production of cultural artifacts: exchange value (the worth of a thing calculated in monetary terms) was stressed rather than use value (the worth of a thing understood in terms of what a thing meant to the end-user).

Adorno's critiques of Benjamin fit within the treatment of what was he and co-author Max Horkheimer called the "culture industry" in Dialectic of Enlightenment (Horkheimer and Adorno 1973). That work argued for a reinterpretation of Western thought from the perspective of the increasing rationalization of society. The philosophers of the Enlightenment had hoped to use the power of human reason to release the shackles hitherto enchaining the human understanding of the world. Yet for Horkheimer and Adorno that philosophical project became problematic. The Enlightenment had unleashed a logic which justified subordinating nature so as to domesticate it. Yet such views and practices also contained the power to shackle society; the fascism of the 1930s and 1940s was the latest manifestation of that dialectical unfolding of enlightenment thought. Adorno and Horkheimer were concerned with fascist propaganda techniques and the Hollywood movie production system of that era, and how culture itself was produced utilizing those same techniques (Schmidt 1998; also see Giovacchini 1998). With the concept of the culture industry Horkheimer and Adorno interrogated popular culture—how its products like movies and advertising were created and distributed as well as how its negative consequences for society and individuals arose from the extension of the commodity form to cultural works produced and distributed for sale.

Negative consequences resulted from the culture industry (Adorno 1975; Horkheimer and Adorno 1973): (a) the commodity form led to a standardization of products, pseudo-individuation wherein supposed originality actually fits within preestablished patterns, mythic repetition of certain simplistic movie themes, and the generation of false needs (e.g., halitosis would seem a problem on par with environmental concerns); (b) the content of cultural products tended to use motifs and story lines that depicted false harmonizing (e.g., "happily ever after" endings and Norman Rockwell-like imagery); and (c) the consumption of a cultural product reinforced passivity and the status quo.

In the grip of the culture industry, the revolutionary spirit of a class-conscious proletariat was all but moribund. For Adorno, the instrumental rationality of late capitalism had prevailed—a conclusion that he continued to maintain in his later writing (e.g., Adorno 1975). As he wrote in Minima Moralia, "The saving principle [for liberating humanity] is now preserved in its antithesis alone." (Adorno 1974: Aphorism Nr. 97). Modern technology for Adorno engulfed human hope and freedom.

To grasp the possibilities of resistance against such high-tech dungeons and their attendant dividuals will require a different theoretical basis. Delineating that theoretical basis also will accentuate the potential of human agency that is embodied in our selves.

Theorizing the Digital Technology of the Internet

Later theorists have analyzed the question and consequences of modern technology differently than Adorno. They supplement Benjamin's insights and allow us to glimpse the potentials for social resistance which arise from Deleuzean dividuality. This section sets forth Hans Magnus Enzensberger's theory of technologically based resistance, and complements his thought with that of Andrew Feenberg and Mark Poster. The section then extends such theories to the Internet and the digitality of its cyberspaces.

Enzensberger set forth his argument in "Constituents of a Theory of the Media" (1982a). Enzensberger framed the technologies of reproducibility (including communication technologies like radio, video cameras, etc.) in terms of their mediating potential, a potential that focused on their bi-directional capabilities. Communication technologies are two-way: a receiver, either device or person, could become a sender. Indeed, technology as mediation/means could be turned against the power structures as part of a broader counter-hegemonic strategy.

Enzensberger thereby implicitly criticized the presupposition of Adorno's critique of Benjamin: namely, that the technologies of reproducibility operate chiefly as a one-way means of communication. Because of the two-way aspect of technology, Enzensberger did not agree that an audience necessarily would be passive receivers. In his essay "The Industrialization of the Mind," he suggested that new complex technologies require intelligent people who retain their thinking faculties—faculties that might be turned against the hegemonic power structures (Enzensberger 1982b).

Technology, for Enzensberger, was not an end in itself, but only a possibly useful mediating device towards the ends sought by social movements. Such an argument did not theorize a way to supplant the instrumental rationality of modern technology; rather, it held that technology and its rationality could be wielded against the dominant order by the same groups deemed by Adorno to be trapped within a(n almost) totally administered society.

Enzensberger offered a dialectical theory of the new forms of communication, a theory which analyzed the immanent potential of technology for pursuing social justice. Technology thus did not generate only injustice and oppression. Feenberg's Questioning Technology (1999) and Poster's What's the Matter with the Internet? (2001b) and The Second Media Age (1995) provide further interrogations of technology.

Feenberg, like Enzensberger, also argued that technology does not inherently tend towards one necessary use or consequence. As Feenberg argued, technology is not an isolated phenomenon; it exists in a "use-context" within which and in terms of which it is evaluated. In the domains where technology reigns as cutting-edge (specifically, in government and business), efficiency dominates. Efficiency, from the perspective of business, is the criterion that allows a company to evaluate technology: does a particular device help the business generate more profits? From the perspective of government, does a certain technology achieve the desired result most efficiently? Yet in our everyday life a different criterion is used, namely, meaningfulness. What is meaningful to us at home, for example, differs from what is meaningful at work. Hence, technology is evaluated within contexts which establish particular "horizons" of meaning. Here Feenberg employs the notion of signification, although he does not seem to consider that technology is indefinitely open with regard to what it can mean. Nonetheless, the meaning of technology exceeds the instrumental rationality of the technocrats in government and business. Feenberg illustrated his argument with reference to a French telephone-like communication system which was intended for accessing government databases. Instead, the users found other things to do, such as communicate with each other. Because technology derives some of its meaning from actual use by us in everyday life Feenberg theorizes that alternate uses of technology might also prefigure the possibility for alternate social systems.

Feenberg did not detail the specific case of digital technology or cyberspace. His was a more general theory of technology seeking to find commonality among the various forms of technology and the various forms of social struggle that currently exist. Identity groups, which have supplanted numerically work-based organizations such as unions might find common ground in struggles over the uses of technology which pervade every aspect of social life. A "democratic rationalization" of technology, as he termed it, might vanquish the technological rationalization that historically has prevailed.

Poster quite directly tackled the Internet by way of theorizing the relationship of human identity to technology. He worked explicitly in the tradition which holds that changes in communication technology bring about changes in human subjectivity, specifically changes in the sources for the constitution of identity. In figuring out who we are, we can draw upon many sources from other communities in other places. Crucial to this argument is the idea that our identity is itself a signification system, as indicated in a previous section, is "radically open" to new configurations. Digital technology is integral to such reconfiguring because it permits the morphing of its products in ways that alter the original. In Poster's analysis, there is no one-way use of digital technology. Rejected here are Adorno and others who theorized the domination of technology and its instrumental rationality over humans and their subjectivity. Rather, technology is held by Poster to be "underdetermined"—e.g, its consumption and use were not dictated by the technological form or its norms of technical efficiency. Humans can use it in ways different than was intended. Here Poster's conclusion about the progressive use of technology converges with Feenberg's. Alternate uses spell alternate meanings and values, which in turn potentially can spell alternate social futures.

For my purposes, both Feenberg and Poster, albeit in different ways, indicate that technology neither yields deterministic results nor totally dominates us. Human agency in its capacity for action and meaningful production of the world emerges from within, and in opposition to, the technological snares of modernity. Let us now apply such insights to the digital technology of the Internet.

The progressive possibilities that emerge from the Internet lie in its heightened potential for interactivity between senders and receivers. Such interactivity is facilitated via the digitality of the Internet and the multi-directionality of its cyberspaces. Digitality translates everything to, or everything is reduced to, bits of data that are communicated in an underlying binary language. The uniqueness of a thing per se—the physical basis for Benjamin's notion of aura—if not already eroded by mechanical-reproductive technologies is obliterated by digital technologies. Indeed, with digital text or graphics there is no original in the sense of a unique thing. A file may be initially created on one's home computer, but "copying" it to other storage media like diskettes does not generate copies in the older sense of (near perfect) facsimiles. Rather, the back-ups are perfectly identical as far as appearances and uses are concerned— so much so that we could not distinguish them from the initial one created. There is no need to even consider which file was the initial one created. This perfect (digital) identity could not be claimed for text or graphics reproduced via, for example, dittograph devices, photocopiers, or fax machines.

The Internet as a network of networks facilitates the bi-, even multi-, directionality of communication. The multi-directionality of Internet has been characterized in terms of Deleuze and Guattari's idea of the rhizome (Froehling 1997; Hamman 1996; Stivale 1994; Warf and Grimes 1997; Wray 1998). The concept of "rhizome" is intended to theorize the multifarious assemblages of thought and action that develop in opposition to the hierarchical (or arborescent) structures of the state and capital (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). In hierarchies, decisions and authority permeate pre-established paths, subordinating the many in the interests of an elite few. Rhizomes, however, epitomize not only fluidity (in opposition to rigidity), but also the mutuality and egalitarianism of the myriad Net interconnections. In a rhizome, paths continuously branch in all directions. If one path is stifled, then others are used or created in order to bypass the obsolete or obstructed ones. The rhizomorphic dimension of the Internet conveys some sense of the Net's anarchic, acentered, and mutating aspects.

Ultimately, then, the question concerning technology is more a question about the conditions under which technology can be wielded for progressive ends. Such conditions are important to study. Society and its human agents are molded and melded by technology, but also can potentially transform the technology that humans created. Such a dialectical assessment posits technology as a multi-directional mediation. Overcoming modern technology seems out of the question—perhaps this is why pessimism loomed over the later works of many of the Frankfurt School theorists. Yet resistance is not necessarily futile because dividuality offers the potential for struggle.

Dividuals and Cyber-Resistance

Cyberspace is not a "real" place in the sense of a location where we physically meet. "There's no there, there" in cyberspace (Gibson 1988: 40). Cyberspace is thus a construct which allows us to make sense of the interactions of people via computer networks. To cite one of Gibson's more problematic descriptions (cf. Kellner 1995), cyberspace is "a consensual hallucination" (Gibson 1984: 51). Yet, as this section will indicate, the potential for cyber-resistance against technological domination rests on the intentional, collective interactivity implied by the adjective "consensual"

(see Feenberg 1999; Kellner 1997). I will briefly outline the history of communication technology, with special reference to disembodiment, for it is the disembodiment facilitated by digital communication technologies that permits of cyber-actions by dividuals. Next, the positive benefits of dividual action in cyberspace will be "posted." Finally, there follows a short list of groups using the Internet to establish cyberspaces that promote their social and political visions.

Historically, the development of communication technologies has increasingly enabled us to project our thoughts and intentions at a distance. Earlier technologies, like the telegraph, telephone, and two-way radio, have allowed us to extend our "presence" into areas where we are physically absent, i.e., disembodied (Postman 1993; Thrift 1996; Thompson 1995). The disembodiment of cyberspace heralds new levels of human interactivity and instantaneity, all facilitated by the highly advanced communications networks of the Internet (Poster 2001a). Television and radio certainly have allowed some to broadcast their views, and to excite, incite and otherwise mobilize others towards some political end. The older broadcast technologies have "reached" into our homes. Nonetheless, the Internet combines radio and TV elements in a way that permits relatively easier access to more people than the older technologies hitherto have done.

Disembodiment has implications for the traditional bases for political actions. Politics has historically involved co-presence: the self's intentionally political acts and its body occur in one place (Giddens 1984). Such co-presence has hitherto delimited political actions, often in terms of territorial units: I can only be in one spot at one time in order to effect some action, whether voting, attending political rallies, or mobilizing grass-roots support on some issue. However, cyberspace transfixes political boundaries and social spaces, and thereby permits an extension of the bodily scope of political actions; in effect, the physical body is "removed" in cyberspace from the intentional actions of the subjectivity which coexists with the body. Nowadays we are able to perform many political acts as volitional agents without having to dwell physically in social places. And "there" lies the potential for dividuality to facilitate progressive social change.

The disembodiment of the Internet and its cyberspaces has implications for our selves and our capacity for resistance and social injustice and political oppression. I will outline five sets of cases to illustrate this point. First, political actions can be initiated beyond our physical presence. In the mid 1990s the Zapatista uprising received global support and even assistance in the form of e-mails sent to the Mexican government (Cleaver 1998; Kowal 2002; Ronfeldt et al. 1998). We can now be Zapatistas if we want, because we do not have to be co-present in the jungles of Chiapas. We can show our solidarity by directing our political will into Mexico while our actual body resides elsewhere.

Second, such forms of political activism push the limits on the use of the Internet and other forms of computer networks. Many however have envisioned computer networks to make the provision of government services and functions more efficient within national or subnational boundaries. Government services are provided online so as to avoid waiting in line (e.g., surf to www.firstgov.gov for the official U.S. government homepage). Also, electronic voting has been attempted in some localities around the world, such as on governmental issues in Switzerland and England (Associated Press 2003; Peterson 2002). In the U.S., a few states have used remote electronic voting during primary elections (Arizona) and for military personnel to cast absentee voting (Florida and Virginia) (see Madigan 2002).

Third, new political communities can be created over the Internet. We can find or even fashion a commonality of interest that crosses political borders and thereby helps to ally our selves with the "Other" selves in different parts of the world (Warf and Grimes 1997). Communities of mutually held or cooperatively created ideas and interests can be formed around, for example, environmental issues, opposition to war, or even online role-playing games.

Fourth, disembodied politics permits citizens to create their own identities, thereby promoting equality beyond the possibly oppressive signifiers of race, gender, class, sexuality, differential ability (Poster 2001b). For example, in chat rooms we can wrap our selves in new and variegated personas (Turkle 1996). We can "morph" our selves—specifically, our disincarnated avatars—in a rainbow of ways that differ from the body at the computer terminal.

Fifth, cyberspace is a "world" wherein dominant economic and social values are fought against and even transgressed, albeit not always for socially progressive ends. While groups can organize and agitate against the status quo, like anti-globalization protestors and anti-war activists, there are also other activities afoot in cyberspace. Illegalities can be found, from the hacking of web sites and commercial and governmental databases to the illegal distribution and downloading of pirated movies, software, and music. Cyberspace thus permits what de Certeau called the "tactics" of everyday struggle, which are deployed against the "strategies" of control wielded by corporate

and governmental institutions (de Certeau 1984). A tactic like "bricolage" would use some thing found or discarded within the dominant social order for other than its intended purposes. The tactic of "la perruque" spoke to the ways in which official rules were broken from with the social institutions themselves, such as when employees abuse company time for their own personal ends. Although de Certeau studied the physical realm, activities in cyberspace witness his insights into human behaviors, embodied or otherwise.

Researchers have studied a multitude of cases in support of cyberpolitics and the uses of the Internet just cited. The Internet permits groups to express concerns, even protest, and to mobilize across political boundaries, both subnationally and transnationally (Ayres 1999; Bleiker 2000; Kellner 1997). Human rights organizations, political parties, interest groups, and anti-government organizations offer ready examples. Human rights groups, like Amnesty International (www.amnesty.org) and Human Rights Watch (www.hrw.org), use the Internet to distribute their analyses of violations. Such actions contribute to a cyberspatial sphere for the pursuit of rights that transcend (sub)territorial units.

Of course, groups across the spectrum use the Internet to communicate with members, mobilize support, articulate their views, raise money, and so forth. In the United States, the Republican National Committee extols the virtue of the Internet in political campaigning (P. Harrison 2000; Republican National Committee 2002). In addition, hate groups use cyberspace for mobilizing and fund-raising purposes. Examples range from the Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazi groups to racist skinhead and Christian Identity groups (Anti-Defamation League 2004).

Various anti-government groups have used the Web. As indicated above, the Zapatista insurgency in Mexico during the 1990s is an exemplary case. Other anti-government groups have presented their positions via the Internet, such as Peru's Shining Path movement, Sendero Luminoso (Committee to Support the Revolution in Peru, www.csrp.org), and also Peru's Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru, or MRTA (Dartnell 2001).

How effective the Internet is for achieving political objectives depends on a number of factors, all of which are beyond the scope of the present work. In this section, the directly political uses of the Net were stressed as a potential way that dividuality provided the basis for resistance against the processes that limit humans in the first instance. The separation of the incarnated self from its infinitely re(pro)ducible representation—so problematic and limiting for us within an embodied society—becomes in cyberspace a new modality for potential rage against the technologies of control.

Some Criticisms of the Internet's Emancipatory Potential

There are several traditions of leftist thought, including post-Marxism and poststructuralism, that would raise objections to an analysis of the emancipatory potentials of the Internet. In this section I will address two well known thinkers, Jean Baudrillard and Paul Virilio, who could inspire criticisms of this paper's project.

Jean Baudrillard's idea of simulation strikes at the very heart of the possibility of the progressive use of cyber-activism. For Baudrillard, simulation has come to characterize the mode of social production and reproduction of the real. Before Ferdinand de Saussure, it was assumed that a sign of some thing, like a name or image, actually refers to that thing in the real world. Baudrillard argues that our present postmodern condition is hyperreal, where signs refer to other signs in vast reticulated systems of self-referentiality. Baudrillard called this condition "simulation" (Baudrillard 1988: 145). The sign systems created via simulation are the simulacra: depictions of reality for which there is no original. Theme parks, like Disney World, offer cogent examples of simulacra depicting a fairy-tale world. The use of allusions in advertisements and movies to previous cultural products illustrates the seemingly endless plays of signifiers which do not represent real things.

Extending Baudrillard's ideas, cyberspace is a world of simulation, where the signs connecting us to other people or things in that domain no longer have any connection to reality. You can be "other" than you are in the physical world because the signifiers of your identity—the online gaming avatars, the screen names, etc.—do not necessarily match your physicality. Cyberspace, for Baudrillard, is a realm of shimmering surfaces where the signifiers float and can be joined to virtually any signified. As a consequence, signifiers ultimately mean nothing in particular (Jarvis 1998; Kroker and Cook 1986: 176-7; Nunes 1995). As Baudrillard wrote:

> [T]he age of simulation thus begins with a liquidation of all referentials—worse: by their artificial resurrection in systems of signs, a more ductile material than meaning, in that it lends itself to all systems of equivalence, all binary oppositions and all

combinatory algebra. It is no longer a question of imitation, nor of reduplication, nor even of parody. It is rather a question of substituting signs of the real for the real itself…. Never again will the real have to be produced—this is the vital function of the model in a system of death, or rather of anticipated resurrection which no longer leaves any chance even in the event of death. A hyperreal henceforth sheltered from the imaginary, and from any distinction between the real and the imaginary, leaving room only for the orbital recurrence of models and the simulated generation of difference. (Baudrillard 1988: 167).

In that passage, we see that the simulation processes that create the simulacra do not refer to imitation (see Raulet 1991). Imitation would still posit a reality to which signs could refer. Rather, simulation is production—the production of increasingly self-referential sign systems that are reality or, to use Baudrillard's term, the real is hyperreal. In such a hyperreal world cyber-activism, even cyber-resistance, is useless: the loss of the capacity to generate truth (or even TRUTH) spells the futility of political actions seeking to create a more just world.

There are various cogent criticisms of Baudrillard's concepts of hyperreality and simulation (e.g., Best and Kellner 1991; Bleiker 2000; King 1998; and Luke 1991). Kellner, for example, points to Baudrillard's analytical stress on simulation as form rather than the apparatus of the media technologies that are integral to Baudrillardian simulation (Kellner n.d.). Hence, one avenue for an immanent critique of Baudrillard is to theorize the role of technology in terms of its necessary and implied social relationships. For Baudrillard, production in a Marxian sense has been superceded and replaced by the interminable reproduction of signifiers. But we can ask Baudrillard: what about the technology through which the signs are communicated and distributed? Such technology is itself evidence of an obdurate physicality and it marks the social materiality that Baudrillard argued had been supplanted by reproduction (see Luke 1991). Technology as mediation bears the social reality that characterizes its basis in capitalist production processes, including worker loss of control over production decisions and exploitative wage labor conditions (see Downey 2004).

It is precisely the technological mediations, and the humans embodied in social relationships, that lie at the core of the Internet's potential for facilitating the struggles for social justice. And just as certainly those interconnections, as well as the implications of disembodiment in cyberspace, have been criticized. Paul Virilio offers a good example of one such critic.

Paul Virilio has studied the ways in which advanced communication technologies have increased the speed of human interaction (e.g., Virilio 1994; Virilio 1995; Virilio 1996). The accelerated speed of cyberspace's synchronous communications not only erases distance (to the applause of cyber-politics's proponents), but also creates instantaneity. In Virilio's words, cyberspace allows for "instantaneous telepresence" (Virilio 1997: 10-11). This has changed the world, Virilio argued, because we now can act at a distance (i.e., "tele-action," or "action-at-a-distance" [Virilio 1996]).

For Virilio, however, such telepresence and any of its advantages must be understood in terms of its serious human costs.

Action-at-a-distance is a phenomenon of absolute disorientation. We now have the possibility of seeing at a distance, of hearing at a distance, and of acting at a distance, and this results in a process of de-localization, of the unrooting of the being. 'To be' used to mean to be somewhere, to be situated, in the here and now, but the 'situation' of the essence of being is undermined by the instantaneity, the immediacy, and the ubiquity which are characteristic of our epoch. (Virilio 1996)

For Virilio, the speed and placelessness of cyberspace disorients humans. The bodily immediacy that helps to confer meaning on places is lost in the cyberspaces of the Net, a situation made all the worse in an accelerating world.

For Virilio, there was another negative dimension of our interwoven and high-tech world. A global accident was possible, Virilio argued, wherein our very technological interconnectedness would cause a problem in one area to ramify across the globe (Virilio 1994; Virilio 1996). Had the so-called Y2K Bug actually happened as some anticipated on 1 January 2000, we would have witnessed just such a global accident.

Virilio has indicated there is something of use in information society, especially in developing or fostering a degree of commonality (Virilio n.d.). Nonetheless, the general trend of his work laments the increasing diminution of face-to-face interactions among people (Armitage 2000). As a consequence, Virilio's work does not enable us to theorize a positive set of strategies and tactics for cyber-activism (Kellner 1999). Such would require us to understand the capacity for human agency to grapple with, and maybe to ameliorate, the often oppressive effects of the interconnected high-tech world. This in turn would require a different philosophical basis. As the overall theme of this paper has indicated, the key to understanding the progressive opportunities of cyberspace is to understand the relationship of human agency and technology. Human agency is constituted and reconstituted by society and its

technology, but also is vital in the creation of that technology in the first instance—and that dialectical relationship is the fundamental basis for hope. Such a relationship is at odds with theoretical positions reducing humans to unconscious animals, atoms colliding in space, or automatons agog at technological forces swirling beyond their control.

High-tech communications make for dangers and problems, as both Baudrillard and Virilio have well illustrated. Our potential to change society via technology nevertheless offers considerable hope. But our human agency is not boundless, for there are material (or structural) limitations on our activities. The next section outlines several dimensions of such constraints.

The Materiality of Cyberspace: Caveats for Cyber-Resistance

I do not wish to sound overly optimistic; there are limitations to the political effectiveness of a self disincarnated from its physical body. While technology removes the physicality of our embodied selves from cyberpolitics, cyberspace has not necessarily removed the embodied materiality on which the Internet is based. Indeed, materiality in the form of, for example, computer hardware as well as communication equipment and satellites provides the necessary conditions for the possibility of cyberspace. All Net users—whether casual Web surfers, e-commerce shoppers, dedicated social activists, or the "console cowboys" of cyber-fiction (Gibson 1984; also read Vinge's "True Names" originally published in 1981 [Vinge and Frenkel 1999])—require the materiality of hardware to attain the incorporeal domain of cyberspace.

Materiality entails more than the mere physicality of things. Social relationships of production, distribution, and consumption mediate those "things" (e.g., see Adorno 1981; Horkheimer 1989). Such relationships frame our actions in terms of opportunities and constraints as well as in terms of values and what "counts" as valuable. But, as many critics on the left argue, the constraints and opportunities are not equally distributed. Thereby, schisms are generated between the rich and poor, those with capital and those with little else but their labor power to sell. Moreover, what things and actions are counted as valuable often have no necessary connection to their intrinsic worth for societal survival. School teachers and garbage collectors as well as surgeons and (arguably) entertainment celebrities all perform societally useful roles. Yet the latter group tends to be paid vastly more than the former. Whatever the market will bear does not necessarily lead to just outcomes. Capitalist relations hence yield oppression, alienation, and exploitation.

In the same measure, the Internet can be examined in terms of its materiality. Indeed, the components of the Internet do not spring fully formed from the brows of software programmers, computer engineers, and dot-com entrepreneurs—no autonomous technology here. The Net's components are embedded in capitalist relations of production. The telephone and fiber optic lines, the satellite systems, the routers that coordinate the packets of data whirling at high velocity, and the computers on our desktops are produced by flesh-and-blood people in specific locations under the unequal conditions of wage labor (Downey 2004). Such material relationships also hold true for the software—and the programmers, of course—that permit the different components to work together to achieve communication. Moreover, the impetus to knit places together via advanced technology is profit-driven. Yet places without a market demand might not be served, even though fellow human beings live in those "other" places.

The capitalist relations mediating the creation and use of the Internet are not without their political dimensions. The kernel of what became the Internet was itself initially the creation of U.S. government military policy in the grip of the Cold War (Louw 2001; Murphy 2002). Hence, materiality is not simply economic. It is best understood as a political-economic ensemble of social relations, each affecting the other in mutually reinforcing ways. Some actors are structurally and systemically selected over others in terms of their supportive roles in production, circulation, and consumption (e.g., Offe 1974). Those who do not possess financial or political "capital" often are effectively hindered, even if not legally or coercively forbidden, from exerting meaningful influence over public policy. This holds for Internet policy as it does for other issue areas. The governmental arenas may be formally open to all citizens in a capitalist liberal democracy, but not all voices carry equal weight or are equitably served.

What follows is a short list of the ways in which material relations (in the broadest, interrelated sense) not only constrain our actions in the corporeal world, but also persist in the disembodied realm of cyberspace. I will sketch five constraints on the potential of dividuality to overcome the oppressive relations of control.

The first material constraint highlights the hegemony of capitalist relations and norms. Despite the emancipatory

potential of cyberspace's open-source ethic (see, e.g., Barbrook 2000 on "cyber-communism"), market-oriented ideologies remain a dominant way to understand how to utilize the Internet (Hirschkop 1996). Profitability is the touchstone for much of what is produced for distribution via the Net (Louw 2001).

The second material constraint involves inequality. There are inequalities associated with the Internet which affect what is consumed and how things are distributed. This is most clearly manifested in the "digital divide" (Norris 2001). The "digital divide" describes the gap between those who have and those who do not have (adequate) computers, the appropriate knowledge, and money for Internet access. The divide unequally determines who can access the Internet and participate cyber-spatially (Dickard 2002; D. Jackson 2002).

The third material constraint entails the nexus between liberal-democratic governments and capitalism. Corporate and governmental policies can limit the potential for digital technologies to be used in ways that emancipate us from injustice and inequality. There are uses made of digital technology that threaten the economic status quo. For example, peer-to-peer file sharing can be financially damaging, as the record industry has argued. But it is even more problematic in that peer-to-peer networks promote the view that information and intellectual property should be free. To thwart just such a notion from gripping more than a small percentage of computer users, the Record Industry Association of America (RIAA) has sought court-ordered injunctions against the Web sites involved and vendors of the facilitating software. The RIAA is also pursuing legal action against hundreds of alleged file-sharers of copyrighted songs (RIAA 2004). Hence, liberal-democratic governments tend to cooperate with corporations due to the very real—i.e., material—interests that such governments have in maintaining a capitalist economy.

The fourth material constraint involves the issue of government surveillance. Access to the Internet can be denied or monitored via government agencies. Such governmental control affects not only how things are distributed in cyberspace but also whether we can utilize them in the first instance. Various governments in non-democratic countries may not target specific people but rather prohibit access via control of the nodal points connecting the various national Internet Service Providers to the Net itself (Kalathil and Boas 2003). Many governments, periodically including liberal-democratic ones, routinely surveil the contents of cyberspace and those who access it through the Internet gateways (Bodeen 2002).

The fifth material constraint points to limits on the possible success of any cyberspatial "consciousness raising." The materiality of cyberspace also affects consciousness and the identity of our selves. Consciousness is not necessarily transformed by the digital technology of the Net, McLuhan notwithstanding (1964). Human prejudices are rooted in social, hence material, relationships. How people interact and communicate with others, even in cyberspace, thus will remain socially embedded (Crawford 2002). Prejudices are not necessarily transformed in cyberspatial communications. Indeed, various forms of prejudice and hatred have been expressed in cyberspace (Fernandez 1999; Kendall 1998; Postmes et al. 1998).

Cyberspace and its preconditions for disembodiment hence have a concrete material base. Cyberspace is often understood to be an analog to the mind. The materiality of cyberspace, however, highlights the embodiment of our consciousness because of the biological locations and the social situations that our selves inhabit whenever we sit at the keyboards and mouse pads. The cyber-conscious of the self is biologically located in space; it dwells within a body, which itself exists within social structures (Lefebvre 1991; Rich 1986). Those social structures involve the ways in which we are constituted as human—who we are in terms of race, class, gender, age, and differential ability. This in turn expresses our life chances, including our access to resources, our exposure to the dominant values in the business and political worlds, and so forth. Cyberspace, when conceived as essentially ethereal and disembodied, is a problematic concept.

Material injustices will continue to constrain our opportunities for struggle. Cyber-resistance is useful, even invaluable; but resistance ultimately retains its embodied component. Thus, by virtue of the materiality involved, incorporeality can supplement, but not supplant, political action in particular places. Despite the world-wide support for the Zapatistas, it was they who put their selves—their mind and body, heart, spirit, and personal identity—in actual danger (see Hellman 1999; for a critique of Hellman, see Cleaver 2000). Activism will still require selves in all of their embodied capacities to resist more thoroughly the repressive relationships of society.

A Future for Our Selves

Despite the limitations of cyberpolitics, I wish to end with measured optimism about the future of selves. Computer networks and other technologies may translate us into dividuals by classifying and reducing us to formulaic

and lifeless representations of our human potential. By means of our technological reproducibility we are digitally reduced to data streams which do not fully mirror our uniqueness and worth as individuals. Such a consequence of digitality argues against the pervasive Western ideologies of individuality. As indicated previously, what we need to effect our individual natures can be denied us, and thereby reveals the inherent tension within capitalist digitality.

What constitutes us as selves (in body and mind) also influences us. Yet we as selves are not reduced to such influences or prejudices. As dividuals, we may be reduced to data representations, but that does not reduce the capacity of our selves as agents because data do not attack our selves' potential for alternative thought and progressive action, only our expression of it in the here and now. Moreover, our body anchors our spatio-temporal praxis, not in its physicality (not as an irreducible presence), but rather by its implication and constitution within social relationships. And bodies conjoined with minds speak of the possibilities of social progress. Herein lies theoretical hope and optimism: ultimately, who we are—and who we can become—transcends our data representations at any one point in time and space.

Resistance to oppression does not arise automatically from the "proper" conjunction of social forces or from the availability of technological means. Resistance must be organized politically "on the ground." Nonetheless, theorizing the conditions for the possibility of resistance is necessary. It requires analysis of the material structure of society, a structure which constrains both our praxis and our cyber-praxis. As indicated above, we do not escape the materiality of our embodied social existence, even in the decorporealized realm of cyberspace. Resource inequalities and hegemonic norms, both generated by exploitative production relationships, will place limits on who can act and on the reasons for which they might act.

Nonetheless, the technologies in Deleuze's concept of the societies of control also hold the possibility for progressive social change. By reproducing our selves as digital representations in places where we are not physically located, we enhance our capabilities to act and interact in other places. The technologies of control hence might allow for our reproducibility elsewhere, and thereby might facilitate the possible creation of commonality and trans-border alliances. Resistance in the 21st century is also digital resistance. Cyberspace offers us dividuals "an-Other" terrain for social struggle.

With such claims I theorize in the tradition of thinkers like Benjamin, Enzensberger, Feenberg, and Poster, while also eschewing technological pessimism. In a similar spirit Deleuze wrote: "There is no need to fear or hope, but only to look for new weapons" (Deleuze 1992). And, I might add, perhaps we can start with the tools at hand.

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Valuble Objects and their Differentiation in Social Space and Time

Emanuel Smikun

One of the central issues faced by all social research is identifying a limited number of concrete social objects to represent abstract social structures and processes. Yet the rationale for selecting such objects is one of the least studied areas in sociology. A typical assessment of the situation sounds like this: "Existing outcome data—available from public administrative records and household surveys—are limited in terms of what is measured, how well it is measured, the extent to which various measures can be aggregated at the individual and household level, and the possibilities for disaggregating these analyses to policy-relevant geographic areas. [...] Disagreements begin with the question of what to measure" (Meyers and Garfinkel 1999:150). Rather than following the tradition of treating ad hoc survey variables as social indicators, why not take a bird's eye view of social structures and processes with a hope of finding pivotal objects of social measurement there? Our strategy is to look for such valued objects in distinct phases of recurrent macrosocial functioning, or reproduction, where they are embedded and involved in the mechanisms of social exchange and social distribution. This study in the sociology of knowledge explores dimensions of cognitive and objectified social space and time underlying the differentiation of central social values and the measurement of their structures.

It is widely believed that what we buy are goods and services for individual consumption. This is an illusion introduced by classical economics and repeatedly pointed out by critical social scientists, notably by Marx, Veblen, and Baudrillard. In reality, all tangible things that we acquire are important to us not in and of themselves but because of the social meanings that are attached to them or, more exactly, to which they are attached by Western promotional culture and the advertising industry in particular. For Marx, the immediate use-values of commodities were just fronts for certain amounts of (abstract) productive labor power that made highly mediated commodity exchange and, in this sense, the entire system of capitalist (productive) social relations, possible. Once you could see the unfair exchange between working and capitalist classes in these terms, Marx argued, the roots of the enormous disparity in their social conditions would become apparent. Veblen (1959) talked about the leisure class that indulged in conspicuous consumption where consumer goods were acquired not to satisfy material needs but rather to show off their privileged social position. Baudrillard continued this line of thought in our time. Consumer goods, he wrote, "speak to us not so much of the user and technical practices, as of social pretension and resignation, of social mobility and inertia, of acculturation and enculturation, of stratification and of social classification." They are "nothing but the different types of relations and significations [...]" (1981:38, 63).

It is the social meanings attached to goods and services that are subject to social exchange and social distribution. But why should such an analysis be limited to status symbols and social status? Even if status is used today to designate categories of (functional) division of labor as well as stratified social hierarchies, it is not the only valuable object circulating in social exchange and distribution. This line of thought can be broadened to include lifestyles, social orientations or attitudes, and forms of socialization. We can equally maintain that what we exchange on a daily basis is primarily quality lifestyle, good social status, optimistic orientation or attitude, and successful socialization. In the past, the meaning of our daily lives was supplied primarily by religious services and by high culture sponsored by established religions, whether in classic architecture, paintings, or music. Not any more. Today, it is advertising

that gives meanings to the multitude of mundane things surrounding us.[1] Although it may be so in economic theory (Goldman 1992; Jhally 1991), advertising is anything but fetishism of goods and services. Studies show that advertising does not work as advertised. It does not substantially increase sales.[2] Advertising can only be effective in creating strong brand names. But while it takes decades to establish a brand name, the immediate effect of national advertising for consumer goods is to promote higher social status and better lifestyles rather than the desire for goods and services as such.

The marketing of better lifestyles, better social statuses, better orientations, and better forms of socialization is the main effect of advertising. We may differ in the degree to which we accept this symbolic reality, but not in its kind. No one can escape this world of all-pervasive social meanings. "Advertising [...] surrounds us and enters into us so that when we speak we may speak in or with reference to the language of advertising and when we see we may see through schemata that advertising has made salient for us. [Advertising] shows people only as incarnations of larger social categories. [...] It is thoroughly optimistic, providing for any troubles that it identifies a solution in a particular product or style of life " (Schudson 1990:74, 78; see also Wernick 1991). From the adolescent religious spirituality of sacred origins and promises of salvation, we have graduated to a secular spirituality of quality social structure and upward social mobility with all the risks and uncertainties that mature existence brings. If we can show that social life indeed revolves around socialization, orientation, status, and lifestyle, and that these valuable objects can be observed, measured, operationally defined, and presented as the first social reality, then we may be able to demonstrate that perhaps not all that is solid melts into air, and that rational social science still makes sense and has its uses.

Phases of Social Reproduction and Circulating Social Objects

As true objects of mediated, or generalized, social exchange and social distribution, lifestyles, statuses, orientations, and socialization also form the core of major phases of macrosocial change. In this latter capacity, socialization, orientation or attitude formation, status attainment, and lifestyle maintenance have aggregate collective as well as individual forms. Each one of these main phases of social change can also itself be considered as a distinct social process, and its own, second-order phases (or mechanisms) can be identified. Thus, socialization is achieved by virtue of primary care giving, by formation of reflected identities (Cooley's [1925] looking-glass self), by associating with attractive others such as role models, and by constructing our own unique identities proper.[3] Having been socialized to a greater or smaller extent to previous generations' standards of behavior, at a certain point in our growth, usually in youth, we form orientations of our own—beliefs, opinions, expectations, and preferences—that are not only different from those of our parents and other agents of socialization, but are often expressly opposed to them. The conflict between the outcomes of socialization and newly formed orientations or attitudes is the main content of growing pains in macrosocial development as well as in individual personal growth and maturation. In a sense, it is inevitable since the second-order mechanisms of socialization and orientation are not all of equal strength.

While our individual and collective identities and generalized others can be constructed and reconstructed practically at will, the results of early socialization—of primary care giving and looking-glass self—are much more lasting. They rarely disappear. Similarly, while public opinion and preferences are volatile and have a capacity for quick changes, deeply held beliefs and expectations show a remarkable stability spanning generations. The conflicts between early socialization and subsequently formed deep orientations have a potential for running into the extremes of conformism or anarchism. Both carry within themselves the seeds of social upheavals. In developed societies, such conflicts are supplanted and avoided in the later phases of status attainment and lifestyle maintenance. Unlike Weber's early idea of status as external displays of public honor or prestige that may or may not accompany possession of real, or naked, power, whether political or economic, in their actual usage today, status and status attainment refer to acquisition and possession of real social benefits, such as wealth, authority and power, or education. Weber's association of social status with prestige has been replaced by the present focus on achievement as opposed to ascription of prestige and honors more typical of traditional societies based on fixed social positions and titles passed from one generation to another. Moreover, the conceptual opposition of ascription and achievement has transformed the meaning of status ascription itself—from that of titular honor and prestige to mostly extra-social, biologically-based traits of age, sex, color, or kinship.

Status attainment is only a prelude to the acquisition and maintenance of a certain lifestyle into which mature

members of society settle sooner or later. Similar to social status, the concept of lifestyle has also undergone semantic changes since Simmel and Weber. With Veblen's notion of conspicuous consumption, the idea of lifestyle bifurcated into two varieties. On the one hand, lifestyle is seen today as particular ways of satisfying basic needs and pursuing essential interests, both of which can be presumed stable over time and quite possibly coterminous with (equally stable ascriptive) status, as Weber conceived it. On the other hand, however, lifestyle can also be a collection of deliberate practices designed and carried out primarily for others to see, a show, a visibility, a symbolic reality constructed primarily for the purposes of impression management. Critics of the pervasiveness of conspicuous consumption from Veblen to Packard (1950) to Schor (1998, 2000) also show that visible lifestyle maintenance is just as normal an aspect of our social behavior as its basic variety—if not more so. The criticism of consumer society since the 1960's and the 1970's may document rather a runaway inflation of meanings in fashion and other symbolic expressions of visible lifestyle that today drive the production of consumer goods and customers' appetites alike. With semiotic saturation and inflation subtracted, the normality of visible lifestyle is strongly buttressed by the entire corpus of Erving Goffman's work for whom everything we do in public places—be it simple group participation or adoption of distinct interaction practices and forms of talk—is just another act, a performance staged for others to see and approve.[4]

While lifestyle may be related to a particular status, today its maintenance is a phase of social change in its own right rather than an attribute of status, as Weber had it. The reason lifestyle and status are closely associated is that they both carry in themselves properties of socialization and orientation, albeit in different combinations. Status can be seen as social identity guided by preferences. Lifestyle, on the contrary, can be seen as preference for certain social identities. For example, names by which we refer to others as central elements of their (and, indirectly, our) identities can show clear preferences and thus ascribe higher or lower status. Naming can equally signify status achievement, whether directly or euphemistically, as in the case of negative preferences in the environment of political correctness (Valentine 1998). It is this combination of certain properties of socialization and orientation in status and lifestyle that gives them the capacity to overcome the tensions between socialization and orientation.[5]

Thus, truly valuable social objects and the main phases of social change come in pairs: early and later socialization; deep and volatile orientations; ascribed and achieved status; basic and visible lifestyle. To make these abstract notions more concrete, they must be specified for numerous social groups. What kind, whose lifestyle or status is exchanged and socially distributed? The same objects in social circulation may be of vastly different value to members of different social groups. Are we talking about marital or citizenship status? Is it the lifestyle of the rich and famous or that of the homeless and unemployed? To answer questions of this kind, we must have an unambiguous scheme of social classification. From Simmel's web of overlapping social affiliations to Saussure's and Baudrillard's semantic social differences, to Schutz's multiple social realities, to Bourdieu's cultural distinction, to Luhmann's social differentiation, to Walzer's spheres of justice—all points to the need for a system of categories capable of capturing innumerable social differences in a consistent and sufficiently parsimonious way.

Social statuses can be unequal, but so can all other valued social objects-lifestyles, orientations, identities, etc. Conversely, too, there is nothing in social status that is specific to social inequality. In yet another perspective, social status as an ascribed or achieved position can also be horizontally differentiated, for example, by occupations, among several other axes, as can lifestyle, orientation, and socialization. A division into social classes may have been predominant in Marx's time, but today it is an abstraction from a more complex reality of multiple inequalities in numerous and quite separate dimensions of social differentiation, such as occupational, residential, or regional. The idea of social stratification signifies this more complex reality where social inequality in one dimension can be very different from—or inconsistent with—inequality in another. When we use the Marxist concept of social classes as a sharp and sweeping social division to signify social stratification today, we tend to overlook horizontal occupational differentiation of managers, professionals, precision machine operators as well as laborers with quite different stakes in organized mesosocial movements and different ideological claims that, in turn, have different foundations in macrosocial data.[6]

Weber (1978:386-398, 921-937) included occupations and ethnicity in the category of status groups. He characterized ethnic status groups as a "cultural possession of the masses" and constituent of Kulturgemeinschaft, or cultural community, and occupational status groups as "continuous sources of income and earnings for individuals" in the context of competitive market activity. In yet a third sense, Weber spoke about occupations as synonymous with a religious calling or vocation (1978:140-144) which in German is rendered by the same word (Beruf). In fact, The Protestant Ethic opens with a discussion of the predominance of Protestants in leading business occupations in

Germany whereas Catholics belonged as a rule to lower occupational status groups. It is obvious that this typology is not based on consistent and mutually exclusive categories. As a concept coterminous with division of labor, occupation is what has traditionally been called a (synchronic) functional social distinction, yet it was also treated as a (diachronic) institutional one. This caused Parsons (1951, 1954a:Ch.2) who followed Weber's cue to reflect on the difference between businesspeople and professionals. His conflated statements on stratification proved to be highly influential.[7] They were accepted by several generations of sociologists as a normative concept. Its revision is long overdue.

Differentiation in Social Space

To begin with, segmentation—that is sometimes deemed to be an aspect of social differentiation (Luhmann 1982:232-238, 1995:190)—can be restricted to demographic groupings, those based on sex and age. Strictly speaking, these are extra-social, natural biological categories not amenable to artificial social manipulation and change as truly sociological properties of human groups are. Such segmentation, say, into younger women, younger men, older women, and older men with a cut-off age about 45, can be useful in empirical tests of the idea that the causes of sex and age discrimination are social constructs rooted elsewhere. Truly social differentiation is found at the intersection of two abstract sociological notions: social statics and social dynamics, or social structure and process. Pure social process, or history, can only be differentiated into its component trends. However, since historic trends are of different strength and duration, their contemporary view never presents a complete or coherent picture, and their relevance for the present is only revealed in the static, structural view. Lacking any specificity beyond extant social inequality, this purely structural view is likewise but a useful abstraction.

Thus, the most abstract cross-sectional structural dimension of social differentiation is that of (vertical) social classes as pure relations of social inequality, or what Simmel called subordination and superordination. What was once seen as a simple reality of rigid estates of slaves (or serfs) and masters, then somewhat more mobile classes of peasants-landowners-workers-and-bourgeoisie is now a multitude of largely permeable upper, upper-middle, lower-middle, and lower classes of various kinds. Today, we can speak, for example, of economic inequality between the groups of those having low standards of living, making ends meet, the comfortable, and the rich whose cultural or political classification may be quite different. What is more, a further differentiation of all such classes into occupational or employment groups provides a much more accurate picture of social stratification. Although the definitions of all such classes and social strata change over time, multi-dimensional differentiation into unequal social classes and their further social stratification are two indelible characteristics of all modern societies.[8]

Social process and social structure are highly abstract notions, but properties of them both are present in the more concrete ideas of linear social development and cyclical social reproduction. Diachronic social development is nothing other than a linear sequence of distinctive stages, i.e., a structured process, or structure-in-process, whereas synchronic social reproduction is a procedure consisting of recurring phases, i.e., a transforming structure, or process-in-structure. Linear-developmental social change produces social institutions—a multitude of routine practices that are conventionally grouped into four large domains—familial (courtship, marriage, parenting, adoption), cultural (traditions, art, science, education), economic (property, contract, market, firm), and political (party, government, legislation, constitution). Thus we speak of family lifestyle, family status, family orientation, and family socialization as well as cultural, economic, and political. This is the locus of usually slow, secular social change that explodes in wars or civil strife only if it is artificially inhibited or precluded.

In contrast to linear sequences of social development that are responsible for relatively stable but ever changing social institutions, the artifacts of cyclical social differentiation can erode and be obliterated much more quickly unless they are continuously regenerated, reproduced and reconfirmed. The categories of cyclical reproductive social differentiation are revealed in the evolution of social space and social time. Yes, we remember Karl Popper's (1974:150, 158) warning: "Historicism mistakes [...] interpretations for theories. This is one of its cardinal errors. [...] The human factor is the ultimate uncertain and wayward element in social life and in all social institutions. [... Every] attempt at controlling it completely must lead to tyranny; which means, to the omnipotence of the human factor—the whims of a few men, or even of one.." To overcome the historicist confusion between factually concrete situational history having no evolutionary logic of its own and formal reconstructions of social evolution guided by a logic of abstract conceptual schemes, it is necessary to abandon attempts to find social evolution in changes of

stratified social structures that are always accidental byproducts of historic processes.

Instead, reconstructions of social evolution must be confined only to structural processes by which human civilization has been appropriating and improving its material environment—social space and time. If we additionally assume an interplay of multiple institutional avenues in the evolution of human social environment, we can also overcome prevailing skepticism about the possibility of progressive development that originated in the demise of the 19th-century ideas of linear and providential history as conceived by Comte, among others. It is also useful to distinguish in this connection between cognitive and objectified meanings of this evolution. While we speak of sequential evolutionary stages as markers of linear-developmental differentiation of institutional domains in a strictly objectified sense of existing stock of knowledge, the evolution of social space and time responsible for cyclical-reproductive social differentiation must be considered in both its cognitive and objectified senses since it is a less frequently studied topic.

Our planet became social as soon as we began traveling across it. It can be said that the social meaning of this geographic space was created by virtue of human travel and by the way we oriented ourselves in it.[9] Human spatial orientation evolved across the ages from early empirical navigation based on the skipper's personal knowledge and experience, to navigation by stars with compass and astrolabe, to astronomic navigation with marine chronometer and sextant, to the radio location and GPS navigation of today. Geometry, the science of spatial measurement, and the development of numeration itself from fractions to hypercomplex numbers, closely followed this evolution of navigation. Empirical navigation was thought of in terms of elementary Euclidean geometry; navigation with compass and astrolabe, in terms of Cartesian analytical geometry; astronomic navigation with the sextant, in terms of non-Euclidean geometry of Gauss, Bolyai, Lobachevsky, Riemann, and others that also gave rise to differential, projection, and drawing geometries. Finally, modern GPS navigation is reflected in the science of topology. Each one of these evolutionary methods of navigation and each historic period in the advent of new geometric ideas was characterized by its special method of co-measuring distance as extensive and intensive quantities that determined a vessel's location in space. These methods also brought about new concepts of the number itself as resolving the differences between extensive and intensive quantities. Figure 1 gives a graphic representation of all these relationships.

Figure 1. Evolution of cognitive social space

Antiquity - Middle Ages	Empirical Navigation	Elementary Geometry
Extensive Quantities	Direct distances from cape to cape, from light-house to light-house, etc.	Lines and angles whose magnitudes are given in theorem's conditions
Intensive Quantities	Distances actually traveled by a vessel at various angles to shoreline	Lines and angles whose magnitudes are built in proving theorems
Numbers	Fractions that showed, along with positive whole numbers, a vessel's location on numeric scale relative to destination	

15th - 18th Centuries	Compass & Astrolabe Navigation	Analytical Geometry
Extensive Quantities	Distances to certain latitudes on a meridian.	Abscissas of points
Intensive Quantities	Distances covered by a vessel between known and achieved latitudes at a certain angle to meridian	Ordinates of points
Numbers	Negative (rational) and irrational numbers that gave a vessel's location relative to destination as solutions of algebraic equations of a certain degree	

18th - 19th Centuries	Astronomic Navigation	Non-Euclidean Geometry
Extensive Quantities	Longitude of point of departure	Curvature radius
Intensive Quantities	Local times of observing celestial bodies at a certain angle to horizon	Internal corners of triangles and their opposite sides
Numbers	Real and imaginary (complex) numbers that gave a vessels' location relative to destination as solutions of differential equations	

20th - 21st Centuries	Radio Navigation with GPS	Topology
Extensive Quantities	Distances and directions to satellites with known locations	Cycles
Intensive Quantities	Position lines	Chains
Numbers	Hypercomplex numbers that can give a space craft its location relative to destination as solutions of homology groups	

But this is only the cognitive aspect of our social space. This space also has a constructive aspect where products of our cognition are registered and objectified, however temporarily. In this constructively objectified sense, social appropriation of geographic space consists, firstly, in an extensive growth, in a continuing territorial expansion of human habitat. All continents, countries, and regions bearing their specific geographic names are but markers of past steps in the evolving process of human territorial expansion. Surviving in the present, these diachronic developmental sequences also become synchronic contemporary distinctions that give an ordered sequence to what at first glance appears as a collection of nominal entities. Thus, the following sequence of five major U.S. regions can be taken as a fair reconstruction of American westward expansion from its first colonies in Massachusetts and Rhode Island: North East - South Atlantic - East Central - West Central - the West. This rough outline that foregoes actual historic details represents the extensive evolution of American social space in its constructively objectified sense. In its intensive dimension, the evolution of objectified social space consists in a progressive development of forms of human settlement—from villages in rural areas to small towns, to medium-sized central cities, to metropolitan centers, to their suburbs. The addition of a vertical Cartesian dimension to horizontal territorial sprawl is but the most obvious aspect of this process of intensification of objectified social space. Its true meaning is in the intensification and concentration of human communication, both in the physical sense of transportation and in the sense of verbal as well as nonverbal sign systems.

Differentiation in Social Time

To be sure, while the two dimensions of social spatial evolution are analytically separate, they have always been intertwined in complex ways as well as with other, non-spatial factors. For our purposes, however, these evolutionary sequences give well-grounded categories for differentiating phases of synchronic social reproduction. We can use the same logic of differentiating phases in the evolution of social time. Social time, too, has its cognitive and constructively objectified meanings, each with its intensive as well as extensive dimension. The extensive dimension of cognitive social time is marked by historiographic periodizations in the development of our civilization. Although there is

evidence that we are only now rediscovering knowledge available to humans many thousands of years ago (Sitchin 1976), Greco-Roman Antiquity is usually considered the beginning of the growth and progressive sophistication of human rationality, and its subsequent stages are taken to be the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Modern Age. In addition to this extensive growth, cognitive social time has also been undergoing a process of intensification marked by the addition of new, ever shorter recurrent temporal cycles of cooperative human activity. Originally, only important annual seasonal events were staged and religiously recreated. Recurrent and routine monthly, weekly, and daily observances were gradually added to these yearly festivals and rituals. While yearly, monthly, and daily cycles of intensive cognitive social time can still be associated with the natural movements of celestial bodies, the week and Sabbath rest were purely artificial social inventions (Zerubavel 1981, 1985).

We find extensive and intensive dimensions in objectified social time, too. Their meanings are revealed in the evolution of employment and occupations. From the early beginnings of running a household and a farm—whether with the help of slaves or by poor freemen themselves—forms of employment evolved extensively first into a system of feudal serfdom where peasants were employed mostly part-time on rented land or on their own land paying rent to their masters, mostly in kind. With the Industrial Revolution came full-time work in the capitalist factory that meant long hours. Attached to the machines that needed no rest, men worked until they couldn't. The welfare state that followed gave some social security to those on sick or maternity leave, to the unemployed, and to retirees. In today's post-industrial society, the evolving organization of employment as the extensive aspect of constructively objectified social time seems to have new qualities, such as independent consulting, telecommuting, job sharing, compressed work schedules, and flextime that are especially rewarding for people with the spirit of entrepreneurship. We can thus differentiate between the following categories of employment: (i) full-time homemakers; (ii) part-timers and those working full-time but less than 40 hours per week; (iii) nine-to-fivers and those working more that 40 hours a week; (iv) retirees and the unemployed; (v) self-employed and those attending school.

It should be obvious that these categories of employment are treated quite separately from their meaning in terms of compensation, such as wages or income. The latter is just an indicator of economic where employment is only one of the axes of its social differentiation. So much for the extensive evolution of social time in its objectified sense. As for its intensive evolution, it is marked by progressive technological and related occupational development since all occupations encapsulate and embody past time spent in education and training for them. Original primitive farming methods were first transformed into industrial work with machine-tools. This, in turn, is being replaced by the evolving information technologies of the present. Given the facts of continuing technological development and a concurrent process of globalization that moves much of production work offshore leading to the shrinking of associated occupations, we cannot simply adopt these distinctions of the past for today's classification of occupations. Thus, in a five-level occupational classification, several formerly differentiated occupational groups of manual work would already be too small to be counted separately. They must be collapsed into a single category of manual occupations. By contrast, several non-manual occupational groups must be differentiated instead, such as trades and services; sales and clerical occupations; administrative and managerial occupations; and professions. Figure 2 shows all these categories of social differentiation in objectified social space and time.

Figure 2. Cyclical-reproductive differentiation in objectified social space and time

	Extensive	**Intensive**
Social space	**Regions** North East South Atlantic East Central West Central the West	**Settlements** rural areas small towns medium-size central cities metropolitan centers suburbs
Social time	**Employment** keep house work P/T, F/T<40 hrs/wk work F/T >=40 hrs/wk retired, unemployed self-employed, in school	**Occupations** manual trades & services sales & clerical administrative & managerial professional

As in the evolution of social space in its cognitive sense, the extensive growth and the intensification of objectified social time was accompanied by the development of temporal standards of co-measurement which made coordination of cooperative human activities possible on an ever-wider scale. Social time was initially purely qualitative and subjective. There were many different—local and historical, culturally distinct—kinds of time. Only relatively recently has time become culturally universal and quantifiable. The first standard in measuring time was an era—BC and AD. The adoption of the monthly, weekly and daily units of Roman and Gregorian calendars were, in turn, further fine-tuned by the use of hours as measured by the hourglass and the solar clock. Finally, modern mean clock time that is also divisible into minutes, seconds, and milliseconds, first introduced in Switzerland, was generally adopted with the expansion of railroad travel in England and its subsequent spread across continents. With its point of origin at the Greenwich observatory, mean time remains our standard way of co-measuring local times. US standard time zones became the foundation of the present system of international time reckoning that does not necessarily follow the original hourly fifteen-degree intervals of geographic latitude. With every new stage in this evolution of constructive social time, humanity progressed from a multitude of isolated local communities to a universally recognized supra-local one that binds us all together and in this sense makes us interdependent (Sorokin 1964; Zerubavel 1979; 1982). This, then, is the overall multidimensional scheme of orthogonal categories of social differentiation (Figure 3):

Figure 3. Orthogonal categories of social differentiation.

	Historic Trends	**Social Inequality**
Abstract	civilization	upper class
	colonization	upper-middle class
	secularization	lower-middle class
	globalization	lower class
	Institutional domains	**Stratified social space and time**
Concrete	familial	regions
	cultural	settlement types
	economic	employment categories
	political	occupations

The orthogonal relationship among all these dimensions of social differentiation means that not only the institutional domains of lifestyle, status, orientation, and socialization are divided into a multitude of unequal social classes, but also that all such classes are further internally stratified by regional, residential, employment, and occupational divisions. Social inequality exists in both of these senses. While class inequality is always present and appears stable, at least within one generation, stratified social inequality, or the inequality of social strata, is much more malleable. In fact, this may be the only area available for incremental social change in the sense of social intervention or control that Karl Popper had in mind.

Social Measurement and Distributive Justice

In principle, social differentiation can be continued even further along these lines, especially by institutions as well as by behavior, to locate any empirical social group of interest. However, as the number of cells in this multidimensional grid expands with all these subdivisions, the number of cases in each cell will diminish. The extensive growth and intensification of social space and social time that are characteristic features of the processes of urbanization-suburbanization and industrialization-computerization, respectively, bring about radical changes in social structures. They present a picture of a virtual race to expand and to make good use of our limited resources of time and space. Culture, technology, and above all, better social organization are human artifacts promising a chance of extending even further natural space and time. But better social organization is contingent upon our ability to

measure and co-measure these social structures themselves. How is such quantitative representation possible?

Social measurement is widely recognized as the bedrock of social science. Despite its apparent schism between reliance either on numbers or on narratives, any social theory can be seen as scaled empirical observations focused and refracted by the prism of conceptual schemes. Lately, a new trend of highlighting relative rather than absolute social measurement has become apparent. The term is co-measurement, or commensuration, and it is seen as a precondition of any novel sociological explanation.[10] Radically inclusive, fundamentally relative, and thus quite within the drive towards a relational sociology (Emirbayer 1997), commensuration is even seen as a source of power. It can make taken-for-granted aspects of social life visible, valued and thus politically relevant. It can also render a hotly debated issue mundane and irrelevant. Commensuration of social phenomena inevitably throws new light on old issues and forces us to review our ideas about them. This is nothing short of a restatement of the original aspirations for social science's power to transform social reality. A further, even greater challenge for the social sciences is to have just a few, and ultimately, even one single supra-measure equally applicable to any and all aspects of social relations. There are numerous social indicators of education, housing, health, and crime, etc. What is lacking is an overarching measure that would co-measure them all and give us a concise picture of the current state of social structure.[11] This ideal emulating natural sciences, particularly classical physics, is meaningful to a substantial body of students of sociology.

Reducing the fragmentation of the social science is indeed an attractive goal, but how do we co-measure wealth, power, fame, and happiness? One clear way to achieve such commensuration is to abandon the practice of measuring social relations in quantities of tangible things, and to see them only as indicators of a broader set of general sociological concepts, preferably limited in number but all-encompassing in scope. We are surrounded by an overwhelming variety of things that noisily command our attention by virtue of incessant advertising. The idea is to see them only as particular representations of social meanings common to all of us rather than as gratification of individual wants. It is the meaning of things, above all else, as standing for structures of human social relations that is important here (Baudrillard 1981, Chikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981). We would be even better off if such a limited set of social meanings could be reduced to a single unchanging and reliable social measure. If gold is (or was originally) a good, unchanging standard for economic value, why not a universal measure of the social?

All these considerations point in the direction of high moral values. They are the only stable, immutable objects of social thought and of social science where social structural arrangements continually change to accommodate them (Smikun 2000). If we assume that moral values such as freedom and social justice are at the core of all structural social change across human history, then they may well be taken as the overarching measures for the entire observed diversity of social phenomena, social processes, and social relations. Indicators of such values will always be historically concrete and local. They will have local and time-bound denomination—as Dollars, Pounds, Rupees, and Yens are for monetary units. But they will all represent the same timeless ideals that are synonymous across all cultures and that are responsible for the continuity of human civilization despite radical structural social changes across ages and continents. In fact, one such measure—social equality and inequality—has long been used to compare diverse facets of social structures such as income, race, and gender relations. There is a vast and still growing literature on race and gender inequality describing and quantitatively estimating various forms of patent and latent racial or gender discrimination.

As a technical mathematical social measure, inequality is used more to measure income distribution. The most commonly used such measures are shares of aggregate income and indices of income concentration, e.g., Gini coefficient. The drawbacks of social inequality as a universal social measure are in some of its concrete interpretations as well as general assumptions. All inequality measures are implicitly based on the egalitarian ideal that in statistical terms is expressed by a rectangular sampling distribution. This alone generates a substantial backlash against inequality studies. Criticism amounts to the charge that egalitarianism cannot account for unequal human merit or desert (Letwin 1983). More attenuated positions are those that advocate equality only of opportunity as opposed to outcomes, e.g., as removal of special privileges or unfair advantages, and those that argue for relatively more equality (less inequality) of actual social outcomes rather than absolute egalitarianism of the communist kind. The latter two attenuated positions contain clues to a better universal social measure that is free from the drawbacks of social equality and inequality. Distributive justice, or fair and equitable distribution, incorporates principles of both relative equality and unequal merit or desert in their pure forms as well as forms of their mutual cross-attribution.

Already Aristotle declared that equality is for the equal and inequality for the unequal, and that all virtue is found in the median between two extremes. Besides these maxims, our ideas about distributive justice come from four major

moral philosophies of modern times: libertarian, egalitarian, utilitarian, and liberal. The libertarian principle from Adam Smith to Hayek (1960) and Nozick (1974) champions distribution according to pure merit or desert resulting from an unfettered laissez-faire pursuit of self-interest in free competition. This principle of naturally occurring social distribution was denounced and opposed by the socialists and communists who advanced the egalitarian ideal. The utilitarian-welfare principle of distributive justice historically served to mediate the irreconcilable principles of egalitarian and desert-based distributive justice. From Bentham to Keynes and other proponents of the welfare state, a principle of deserved equality was promoted, whether in the form of maximizing utility, or securing welfare for a maximum possible number of people. Thus, the welfare safety net is provided only to those who cannot provide for themselves a certain minimal level of well-being. For everyone else, it is distribution according to their merit and desert. Finally, liberal distributive justice from Locke's ideas on government to Rawls' principle of difference has advocated various forms of equal desert. This is another form of mediation between deserved and egalitarian distributive justice that is different from, yet complementary to, the utilitarian-welfare form of such mediation. For example, according to Rawls (1995, 1999), distribution is just if it is deserved by occupants of social positions and offices and is at the same time to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged members of society. The latter is guaranteed by equal access to such positions and offices that are patently of unequal merit.

These four major principles of distributive justice can be conveniently modeled with statistical parameters of probability distributions where probability scores would represent elements of social structures. Since the four historic principles of distributive justice continue to operate—to a larger or smaller degree—in regulating human social relations and are responsible, in the final analysis, for secular institutional-structural social development, a statistical model of distributive justice as a measure of the social must integrate these four parameters. Conversely, the properties of such statistical parameters must be appropriate to model the four major principles of distributive justice. We find such parameters in moment skewness, standard deviation, asymmetry, and unbiased sample size correction factor. Moment skewness can model the libertarian principle of pure merit or desert while standard deviation can model the egalitarian principle of pure equality. In a game with a permanent sum - which relational sociology must assume—it is fairly obvious that greater values of standard deviation signify more platykurtic distributions that can, therefore, model more egalitarian social relations. Similarly, more negative (or less positive) values of moment skewness shift the weight of probabilities to opposite distributional tails, i.e. towards either higher or lower pure social merit. Unbiased sample size correction factor (1-1/N) and asymmetry, also known as simple relational skewness statistic [(mean — median) / standard deviation], also model equality and merit, respectively, but with a difference. Unbiased sample size is integral to sample standard deviation, and the use of its correction factor in generalized normal distribution can emulate Student's t-distribution. Asymmetry, too, carries certain properties of both skewness and standard deviation in that the difference between mean and median in units of standard deviation always signifies skewness. Thus, unbiased sample size correction factor is a proper model of deserved equality, and asymmetry, of equal merit.

To estimate these four theoretical parameters from sample data, we need a family of sampling distributions as quantitative standards having characteristics of (current and local) laws, and as a means of comparing unequal social relations with respect to indicators of social change, i.e. as a model of distributive justice. One way to estimate these parameters is with the help of a multinomial ordinal probit analysis based on a generalized normal distribution with the following density function:

$$f(z \mid \alpha, \gamma, \sigma, \omega) = \begin{cases} \dfrac{\omega}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-\frac{1}{2}\left(\frac{\gamma + z\omega/\sigma}{1+\alpha}\right)^2} & \text{if} \quad \gamma + z\omega/\sigma \le 0 \\[2ex] \dfrac{\omega}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-\frac{1}{2}\left(\frac{\gamma + z\omega/\sigma}{1-\alpha}\right)^2} & \text{if} \quad \gamma + z\omega/\sigma > 0 \end{cases}$$

where α is shape estimated by asymmetry ($-1 < \alpha < 1$), γ is location estimated by moment skewness, σ is scale estimated by standard deviation, and ω is peakedness estimated by unbiased sample size correction factor. This family of variably shaped, variably located, variably scaled, and variably peaked four-parameter generalized normal distributions has very useful properties. It gives an endless variety of continuous unimodal probability curves of monotonously increasing and monotonously diminishing values that includes the standard Gaussian symmetric distribution as a special case produced when shape and location are equal to zero with scale and peakedness equal to unity. If peakedness alone varies, Student's t-distribution is obtained.

Generalized multinomial ordinal probits are found by looking up points on the standardized z-scale just below

cumulative generalized normal probabilities corresponding to sample proportions of their initially ad hoc (grouped) ordinal scores. The probits are the midpoints of the intervals cut off by such points (Agresti 1984, Wickens 1989). This procedure must be iterated with successive generalized normal distribution curves producing increasingly better approximations of probit values and of their four estimated summary statistics. The implicit assumption here is that sample proportions come from generalized normal distributions rather than from the scale of natural numbers. In terms of data theory (Jacoby 1991), there is no rational basis to prefer one to the other. The appropriateness of a family of such specific statistical models will hold to the extent that they are meaningful not only within general logical and mathematical probability theories, but also as representations of normative societal ideals of social distribution. Only in this way can accepted models become specifications for vague, verbally described standards of distributive justice including equality and merit.

Given the plurality of social objects, it is obvious that there is no single correct estimate of distributive justice for the same social group. Walzer saw this as multiple spheres of justice. "When meanings are distinct," he wrote, "distributions must be autonomous. Every social good or set of goods constitutes, as it were, a distributive sphere within which only certain criteria and arrangements are appropriate" (1983:10). But more can be said. Estimates of distributive justice will yield different results in various dimensions of social differentiation even when applied to the same social object. Distributive justice is always multiple in these two senses. Differentiated indicators of social justice are also indicators of differentiated social justice. As various combinations of major, minor, or dissonant chords can produce musical harmony in innumerable ways in different keys, so can distributive justice be different for different social objects and their multiple orthogonal axes of differentiation.

Toward Indicators of Valuable Social Objects

Social science is called upon to reveal deep underlying causes and mechanisms of long-term social processes as well as synchronic phases of cyclical social reproduction that result in large and small structural changes unfolding before our eyes. Is globalization about the outsourcing of manufacturing production or about the spread of American culture? If it is about the spread of the free market economy that proved so successful in the West, why do people protest against it? If the anti-globalization protests have a just cause, can they stop it? And in the reflexive mode, does the process of societal computerization bring about "incredulity towards metanarratives" and the denial of the criterion of truth in favor of efficiency in social science (Lyotard 1983)? The difficulty is that penetrating answers to these questions must be presented within a coherent system of general sociological concepts, and yet make sense in terms of everyday experiences and the existing stock of common-sense knowledge.

The promise given by neatly built conceptual schemes successfully to grasp and interpret empirical social reality never comes without a price. Genuine lived meanings of empirical data are always fuzzy, haphazard, and, ultimately, unfathomable. While the harmony, comprehensiveness, and consistency imposed by an extraneous conceptual scheme on observed lived meanings may obviate the problem of reliability, the extreme rationality of abstract conceptual meanings may easily rob them of their original validity. All social scientists face a hard choice "between surrender [to empirical meanings] and ideal type" (Wagner 1978). Common-sense native meanings cannot be simply substituted with sociological conceptual jargon. The precipice separating them can only be bridged by meanings that are intelligible both in terms of deductively obtained abstract conceptual schemes and in terms of the unique meanings that constitute the language of a local community of natives. Sociologists knowledgeable in both universal and unique meanings must be able to combine them into particular meanings having correspondences in both sets: in abstract sociological categories as well as in the unique local meanings of lived social reality. This mediation between observational data and abstract conceptual schemes is made possible by social indicators.

The idea of social indicators was highlighted in the 1960's out of the immediate need to monitor macrosocial conditions-social problems—in a way that would bring out their broader and more differentiated aspects than those captured by traditional economic indicators. Providing a happy middle ground between raw observational variables and general sociological concepts, social indicators are uniquely qualified to capture latent phases of macrosocial functioning while reducing otherwise exceedingly complex empirical social reality to manageable proportions. Owing to their mediating role between conceptualization and measurement, social indicators carry within themselves these two seemingly irreconcilable aspects of their origin. In their deductive modality, social indicators can produce new domain-specific concepts that have a foundation in general theory and methodology. They can be used as the building

blocks of the social sciences. In their inductive empirical aspect, on the other hand, social indicators supply substantive meanings to the abstract notions of social structure, social change, social reproduction, social development, and social system. Ultimately, only a solid system of social—or what may better be called sociological—indicators built around major categories of social differentiation can give social research comprehensiveness and cumulative discipline. We must have such descriptive indicators before any attempt is made at building middle-range social theories.

If our claim is valid about the ability of basic and visible lifestyle, ascribed and achieved status, deep and volatile orientation, and early and later socialization to embody deep macrosocial structures, they must become the focal points of all empirical social research. When research problems and hypotheses are formulated with an orientation to or in terms of distribution of such social objects , rather than of the endless variety of raw variables produced for a myriad of diverse research projects, all research results will necessarily become mutually relevant, mutually referential, and thus, cumulative. Building a system of indicators of lifestyle, status, orientation, and socialization to organize the collective effort of macrosocial research and maintaining it with regular data collection then will become tasks of paramount importance. Once operational definitions are constructed for indicators of these valuable objects and deployed within a consistent scheme of social differentiation, they can be used to determine quantitative relations among a great variety of social groups. The resulting picture of social relations will form the deep structures in synchronic as well as diachronic macrosocial change.

Endnotes

1. Thus writes Twitchell (1996:11-12), "What is clear is that most things in and of themselves do not mean enough. In fact, what we crave may not be objects at all but their meaning. For whatever else advertising does, one thing is certain: by adding value to material, by adding meaning to objects, by branding things, advertising performs the role historically associated with religion. The Great Chain of Being, which for centuries located value above the horizon in the World Beyond, has been reforged to settle value on the objects here and now."

2. "The idea that advertising creates artificial desires rests on a profound ignorance of human nature, on the hazy feeling that there existed some halcyon era of noble savages with purely natural needs, on romantic claptrap first promulgated by Rousseau and kept alive in institutions well isolated from the marketplace. [...] Aside from comforting purchasers by assuring them they made the right choice, aside from comforting CEOs and employees that their work is important, and aside from certain unpredictable short-term increases in consumption, most advertising does not perform as advertised. Take away the tax deduction that corporations get for advertising, and most expenditures would dry up overnight" (Twitchell 1996:12,109). In support of this latter statement, Twitchell cites studies made over half a century by economists and advertising executives themselves.

3. Mead (1934) expressed these three latter phases of socialization as me, generalized other, and I.

4. In this sense, the problem of lifestyle, and visible lifestyle in particular, is indeed a rather late one. Classical writers Hegel and Marx spoke only of

basic needs in this context as satisfied by a system of institutions of civil (burgerlische, i.e., bourgeois) society, or, better still, by a just mode of production of social relations that determines all institutional superstructures, respectively. The latter point of view gave rise to the idea of (class) interests as the focus of diverse and often contradictory needs.

5. This is how Simmel (1950:409) described this capacity from an individual point of view in The Metropolis and Mental Life, "The deepest problems of modern life derive from the claim of the individual to preserve the autonomy and individuality of his existence in the face of overwhelming social forces, of historical heritage, of external culture, and of the technique of life. [...The] metropolis is the genuine arena of this culture which outgrows all personal life. Here [...] is offered such an overwhelming fullness of crystallized and impersonalized spirit that the personality, so to speak, cannot maintain itself under its impact. On the one hand, life is made infinitely easy for the personality in that stimulations, interests, uses of time and consciousness are offered to it from all sides. They carry the person as if in a stream, and one needs hardly to swim for oneself. On the other hand, however, life is composed more and more of these impersonal contents and offerings which tend to displace the genuine personal colorations and incomparabilities. This results in the individual's summoning the utmost in uniqueness and particularization, in order to preserve his most personal core. He has to exaggerate this personal element in order to remain audible even to himself."

6. While being legitimate and necessary aspects of social analysis, the subject-matters of impersonal

aggregate macrosociology and intentional, action-based microsociology acquire full meanings only in the context of mesosocial realities of nonconformity, voluntary organizations, and social movements in defense of human as well as social rights. This is where institutional social norms are enforced, and where social action confront social institutions. Microsocial action and aggregate macrosocial behavior are but useful analytical abstractions from concrete mesosocial reality.

7. In his first general statement on social stratification, Parsons (1954b) contrasted unequal occupational status and prestige associated with it as mostly achieved rather than ascribed with family characterized by largely egalitarian relationships, especially the conjugal family with dependent children and women removed to non-competitive occupations, if any. He went on to discuss the vagueness of income or standard of living as a common measure of status mediating between occupational and family roles. Here, too, institutional attributes of social groups are unlawfully compared to functional ones.

8. Sorokin (1959:12) put it best: "Any organized social group is always a stratified social body. Unstratified society, with real equality of its members, is a myth which has never been realized in the history of mankind."

9. In Social Mobility, Sorokin (1959:4-6) used the term social space as synonymous with social universe, i.e., in the sense of an array of axes of social differentiation. To distinguish it from our usage, it would be appropriate to call such an array sociological space rather than social.

10. A common yet insufficiently appreciated example of social commensuration is the price of diverse products and services. Other examples are college and faculty rankings, rankings of places to retire, estimates of risks in insurance business, and a host of disparate social statistics in general. It also turns out that commensuration is much more than a technical process of bringing empirical observations of different social phenomena under a single metric. It "transforms qualities into quantities, difference into magnitude. It is a way to reduce and simplify disparate information into numbers that can easily be compared. This transformation allows people to quickly grasp, represent, and compare differences. [...It] condenses and reduces the amount of information people have to process, which is useful for representing value and simplifying decision-making" (Espeland and Stevens 1998:316).

11. Some see this as one of the endemic difficulties of social measurement. "Social measurement presents problems that are not encountered in quite the same form in relation to physical, biological, or economic measurement. [...] Although this difference is perhaps one of degree rather than kind, the absence of formal agreed tools of measurement such as length, weight, distance, or monetary value is a serious problem for many areas of social life" (Bulmer 2001:459).

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Remembering Derrida

Robert J. Antonio

French President Jacques Chirac announced Jacques Derrida's death, stating "With him, France has given the world one of its greatest contemporary philosophers, one of the major figures of intellectual life of our time." Derrida was the leading figure of the literary thread of poststructuralist and postmodernist thought. His approach—"deconstruction"—has inspired scholars across disciplines in literary study, cultural theory, and postmodernist analysis. Legal scholars applied Derrida's ideas in "critical legal" studies, and architects deployed them in their "deconstructivist" phase. Derrida criticized Eurocentric thought, and supported the entry of women, people of color, gays and lesbians, and other marginalized groups into mainstream academic, political, and cultural life. His ideas about these matters contributed significantly to the rise and development of the late 20th century "cultural left." Critics sometimes deride Derrida as a "celebrity philosopher." He has had impact on popular culture. Cultural writers and media critics employ his terms in mass media commentaries, he and his ideas are often invoked in the US "culture wars" over "multiculturalism" and "political correctness," and references to him and his ideas appear in popular culture (e.g., the movie Deconstructing Harry, Derrida was featured in a song by the Welsh post-punk band, Scritti Politti, and in an Egyptian folk song, and a movie documentary about him includes twenty-nine musical tracks ostensibly inspired by him).

Derrida was born and raised in Algeria, then a French colony. A Jewish child living under the collaborationist Vichy government during World War II, he was dismissed from school as a result of the regime's anti-Semitic laws. He learned early what it meant to be "the other." After the war, he studied at the elite École Normale Supérieure, where he met and established a long acquaintanceship with the structuralist Marxist Louis Althusser. Derrida was influenced much more by Heidegger and Nietzsche than by Marx. He also engaged Hegel, Husserl, and other Continental and Classical philosophers, structuralist theorists (Claude Lévi Strauss, Roland Bathes, and Althusser), and major modernist writers. Derrida taught philosophy in Paris for more than twenty years, and later taught at Johns Hopkins, Yale, and University of California at Irvine. He was a prolific writer, dynamic lecturer, and charismatic intellectual.

Following in the tracks of Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, and Heidegger, Derrida stressed the role of language to engage critically western philosophy's problematic concepts of reason and truth; however, he added some new twists. Focusing more on developing a critical theory of reading than framing a comprehensive philosophical vision, Derrida argued that texts neither have fixed meanings nor mirror an author's singular vision. He held that fluid, contingent, plural meanings are obscured or suppressed by socially-constructed binary oppositions (e.g., good-evil, man-women, rational-nonrational, heterosexual-homosexual). He aimed to overturn them by challenging the privileged term and allowing fluid borders, contradictions, and multiplicity to become visible. Although he refused to provide a fixed definition, "deconstruction" refers to his overall effort or various strategies to reveal the plural, conflictive facets of culture embedded in texts. Derrida urged readers to question presuppositions of texts and to engage what is blurred, marginalized, or left out. He resisted linguistic conventions, which he believed impose enormous social constraint and reproduce relations of domination and subordination.

Commentaries about Derrida's passing appeared worldwide. It is hard to imagine the death of any academic intellectual drawing this much attention and generating such heated responses. Even USA Today, CNN, Fox News, and many local news outlets reported about his death, wide impact, and controversial status. More highbrow outlets ran substantial essays about his legacy and, sometimes, multiple, conflicting pieces about it. Le Monde had a ten page

section about him. A German outlet ran comments by Jürgen Habermas, Axel Honneth, and Judith Butler. The Times of London published a detailed article on Derrida's life that addressed, in a balanced way, critics' charges that his work is "nihilist and irresponsible" and related battles over this view (e.g., the furor over his receiving an honorary degree from Cambridge). The paper also published critical pieces about his ideas with satirical titles ("This May Mean Something?" and "Is Derrida Dead?"). Other articles, on unrelated topics, made comic, passing references to his ideas. The New York Times also ran three divergent commentaries about him, and he was mentioned briefly in other pieces. Letters contesting his legacy have abounded, portraying him as the "world's greatest philosopher" and "creative genius" or as a "charlatan" and "axeman of Western philosophy." In The Chronicle of Higher Education, combative e-mails included dueling poetic dirges, personal invectives, and vituperative exchanges, drawing on everything from Nazism to the politics of John Kerry, George W. Bush, Ann Coulter, Bill O'Reilly, and "Swiftboat Veterans For Truth." The polarized views echo the 1990s "science wars" over postmodernism, which cut across disciplines and culminated in the "Sokal Affair" (i.e., the widely publicized debate over a natural scientist fooling the editors and publishing a cleverly crafted, totally bogus essay on postmodern science in the cultural studies journal, Social Text). This battle dramatized a most contested facet of Derrida's legacy expressed centrally in the contentious fight over how he should be remembered: Did he facilitate recovery of elided meanings, which have instrumental, normative, or aesthetic value, or did he erase the standards by which they are deemed valid, good, or beautiful and, thus, undercut the critical judgment, delimited focus, and sustained effort that substantial cultural achievements and even effective daily life require? Did he enrich our understanding of reality, or dissolve it?

The US cultural-right intelligentsia portray Derrida as a central figure in a morally and intellectually bankrupt, liberal left (i.e., a hegemonic "new class" ensconced in academe and other cultural institutions, widely influential in Hollywood and the media, and the source of noxious "political correctness"). In The Closing of the American Mind, the neoconservative broadside about the supposed sorry state of American higher education, Allan Bloom charged that Parisian emigres littérateurs led the US left to abandon Marx for Nietzsche and Heidegger and that deconstruction fueled America's worst cultural inclinations. Bloom saw Derridian currents epitomizing the nihilism and relativism that he held infect the humanities and social sciences, suffuse popular culture, threaten to destroy American cultural standards and moral fibre and, thus, make the nation vulnerable to protofascist currents. The Wall Street Journal's piece on Derrida's passing—"The Meaninglessness of Meaning"—is in tune with Bloom's earlier charges.

Left-wing critics express parallel criticism. In 1987, the year that Bloom's book appeared, Derrida's recently deceased friend, Yale colleague, and fellow deconstructionist, Paul de Man, was exposed for having written articles, when he was a young man, in a Belgian newspaper that collaborated with the Nazis. There was no trace of right-wing or racist ideas in de Man's later work, but Derrida's critics used the discovery to attack deconstruction. Victor Farías' widely-read portrayal of Heidegger's collaboration with the Nazis appeared the same year. The public furor over de Man and Heidegger cast a shadow on Derrida, but few of his critics made any effort to elaborate the connections between the two affairs and deconstruction. Derridians countercharged that the critics had not read Derrida's work or other deconstructionist texts. The critical attacks generated more heat than light. A few years later, left-leaning Richard Wolin charged that Derrida read Heidegger superficially, without sufficient attention to historical and political context, and that deconstruction opens the door to reactionary currents. Also, a legal fight ensued over Wolin's attempt to publish a Derrida interview (for which Wolin had secured permission) in a collection on the Heidegger controversy. This public battle drew media attention, and reached the pages of The New York Review of Books.

In the 1980s, other critics, such as Perry Anderson, Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut, and Peter Dews, criticized Derrida's views of language, subjectivity, and history, connected them to the broader postmodernist theory, and held that they contribute to the erosion of liberal-left political agency and to a cultural climate favorable to reactionary politics. Wolin's recent Seduction of Unreason locates Derrida among thinkers influenced by Nietzsche and Heidegger, and alleges that their radical critiques of Enlightenment rationality undermine the presuppositions of liberal democracy and feed radical-right tendencies. Derridians hold that such criticism is based on erroneous views of deconstruction. They also point to Derrida's support for dissidents in the former communist Czechoslovakia, opposition to South African apartheid, and advocacy for French immigrants and international human rights. Some scholars hold that Derrida made an "ethico-political" turn in later life (i.e., manifested in his work on Marx, assertions that justice cannot be deconstructed, opposition to the Iraq War, and other left-leaning gestures), but other supporters insist that progressive themes were always present in his thought and inhere in deconstruction. Even some sharp critics of

postmodernism acknowledge progressive facets of Derrida's political legacy. For example, Richard Rorty's Achieving Our Country decries the cultural left's lack of a constructive vision of progressive democracy, but concedes that they have contributed substantially to delegitimation of sadistic practices that heap stigma and humiliation on culturally marginalized groups. Terry Eagleton railed against Derridian currents in After Theory. However, his Guardian article about Derrida's passing praised the "stunning originality and intricacy" of his work and memorialized him as an important carrier of the "heritage of May '68" and staunch leftist who helped open the postwar left to the marginal and voiceless.

A certain style of "Derridian" writing has drawn especially hostile reactions, and is a prime source of the dismissive views of his legacy. Although clear in critics' minds, the relation of this work to Derrida's corpus is debatable. Derrida's impact on postmodern discourse is hard to determine with any precision, because his ideas are often fused haphazardly with those of Foucualt, Lyotard, Baudrillard, Gramsci and others. Many writers who use Derrida's terms have not read his work closely, or at all. However, the widely criticized style of "Derridian" work simulates digging deeply while skimming over the surface of texts, ignoring their historical contexts, and reading them very unsympathetically, with little effort to play the role of the other or exercise self-criticism. These "Derridians" repeat erroneous conventions about "modern theorists," pose uninformed, blanket criticism of science per se, and employ references to theorists and concepts to consecrate their normative claims. They use "Derridean" buzzwords in defense of identity politics, hardening binary thinking and forging Schmittian "friend-enemy" dichotomies. Rather than close readings and multiple meanings, their moralizing rhetoric, obscured by fancy literary maneuvers and self-indulgent jargon, results in predictable caricatures and superficially clever, nonsensical, bad writing. Their extreme textualism, or radical "constructivism," manifests a self-referential subjectivism and elision of the body and object world that Nietzsche charged plagues classical western rationalism. Valorizing such work as "Theory," these "Derridians" uphold the very Platonism they claim to escape.

Thinkers embracing the "critical" side of the Marxist tradition have long held that Marx did not advocate the crude "base-superstructure" model attributed to him by his "orthodox" followers and dismissive critics. Engels reported that Marx asserted, commenting on his younger followers' mechanistic materialism, that: "All I know is that I am not a Marxist." Derrida was too kind hearted to berate his misguided followers, but much of their work runs counter to his views and intent. Like Marx's corpus, however, his texts provide bases for the problematic work conducted in his name. Derrida's intentionally obscure, prolix style, unwillingness to define key terms, and employment of neologisms and puns open his texts to misreading and to appropriation by weak, irresponsible thinkers. He gave such strong priority to language and suggested such an open horizon of meaning that he left ambiguous the relations between texts and their external contexts. His vocabulary does not give voice to the obdurate nature of the external world (i.e., that objects, including our own bodies, resist, regulate, or extend beyond representation), how we pragmatically test linguistic categories (e.g., touching an object said to be hot), and how the range and contingency of meaning is regulated by different types of external contexts and pragmatic tests (e.g., "normative" or "aesthetic" views of a literary text versus "factual" instructions about an instrumental routine [how to exit a building]). Derrida's break with the communication model and provision of privileged status to the written word turns attention away from the embodied side of language, interactive meaning construction, and efforts to reach understandings through mutually corrective gestures. His one-sided emphasis on contradictory, multiple meanings favors fragmented views of subjectivity and history and valorizes difference decisively over consensus, solidarity, and cooperation. Derrida does not escape the western "philosophy of the subject."

While I was completing the last few paragraphs of this commentary, a cultural studies student from our American Studies Program visited my office to talk about taking my survey course in Modern Social Theory. We discussed his tentative dissertation topic concerning ethnic and racial representations in professional wrestling. Although precisely the type of topic ridiculed in the dismissive critiques of Derrida and postmodernism, this student's animated discussion, replete with Derridian sensibilities, raised serious questions and posed innovative ideas, which made me reflect on a facet of popular culture in new ways. He explained that he wanted to study modern theory to expand his historical and sociological knowledge and to provide a stronger foundation for his work on culture and identity. He reminded me of other students who I have worked with, during the last two decades, who had similar cultural studies backgrounds and who have related to me how their engagement with Derridian or postmodernist currents opened them to new perspectives, led them to investigate topics that they ignored previously, caused them to think critically about their views and claims, and inspired them to engage in fresh projects. At times, I have observed traces of the problematic facets of the Derridian legacy in their work. However, they have, on the whole, expressed a moral

earnestness, openness to alternative perspectives, and intellectual seriousness, energy, and creativity that is never addressed by the dismissive critics of Derrida and postmodernism. These students manifest the side of Derrida's legacy articulated in the celebratory eulogies.

Christopher Norris described deconstruction as "rigorous demystification." Derrida's effort to make problematic taken-for-granted cultural objects and encourage critical inquiry into their contradictory, hidden sides likely derives from his engagement of Nietzschean ideas. Nietzsche held that reified linguistic categories—"conceptual mummies"—foster mechanistic responses to stimuli. He saw this unreflective manner to inhere in classical western philosophy's transcendental or fixed idea of Truth, which takes the form of banal conventionalism (e.g., rigid moralism, racial stereotypes) and compulsive conformity in the broader culture. Decrying "indecent haste," Nietzsche called for a cultural education that teaches us to resist immediate responses to stimuli, to be slow, mistrustful, and critical in our linguistic practices, and to see what is obscured. In the preface to Daybreak, he urges us to "read well, that is to read slowly, deeply, looking cautiously before and aft, with reservations, with doors left open with delicate eyes and fingers..." Albeit with less eloquence and philosophical boldness, Derrida calls for similar reflexivity. This rich vein in his thought carried into wider postmodern discourses, and is a source of my students' and other Derridians' claims about new inspiration, growth, and insight.

Deconstruction can serve divergent political ends. However, Derrida's left-leaning version can still be used effectively against arrogant scientism, which obscures normative ends and shuts down debate over them. It also might be turned against those "friend-enemy" and "good versus evil" binaries, suffusing populist moral rhetoric, identity politics, and political advertising. Deconstructionist critics of imperial geopolitics might ask; "What is suppressed or obscured when President Bush declares that the US is fighting for 'freedom' and `democracy' in Iraq, when he opposes the idea of 'civilized world' against the 'axis of evil,' or when speaks of 'the war against terror?'" However, some of Derrida's later moves (e.g., going back to Marx or asserting that justice cannot be deconstructed) imply that he was aware that something vital was left out of his approach. Deconstructing Derrida requires coming to terms with the absence of a vocabulary valorizing the reconstructive tasks of forging solidarities, cooperative networks, or planning regimes. We need historically and sociologically determinate, yet comprehensive, social theories that can pose possible new regimes capable of cultivating environmental responsibility, democratic redistribution and participation, and, most importantly, sustainable alternatives to nearly globally hegemonic neoliberalism. This task requires articulation of forceful, focused, and somewhat singular normative arguments (i.e., which distinguish assertively good from bad ends) and arguments that are finely attuned to historical and sociological conditions that may favor or block prospective policy aims. We must go beyond Derrida, but remembering deconstruction and deploying its critical sensibilities in a supplementary way might help avert some of the terrible blinders and bloody mistakes of the last reconstructive era.

Postmodern ideas gained impetus when the post-World War II era was winding down in the 1970s; the long boom ended, the New Left collapsed, Marxist regimes and wars of national liberation were spent, welfare states suffered fiscal and legitimacy crises, and the cultural right and neoliberalism began their triumphal march. In the 1980s, postmodernism gained even more momentum with the development of nascent "fast capitalism" (i.e., new forms of business organization, communication and information technology, media, entertainment, and finance) and of a vibrant politics of recognition (e.g., race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality) that helped animate even stronger postmodern currents. By the early 1990s, the collapse of the Soviet Bloc ended postwar geopolitics, while the first Gulf War and talk of a New World Order suggested an ominous new direction. Postmodern sensibilities expressed contradictory tendencies: liberating release from rigid, limited, repressive facets of Cold War culture and depressing acquiescence to plutocracy, hardened class-lines, spatial apartheid, culture wars, violent neotribalism, and extreme sound-bite politics. Late eighties and earlier nineties endings discourses—the "end of alternatives," "end of left and right," "end of politics," and "end of history"—expressed poignantly the exhaustion of postwar visions of progressive modernization (centrist and left) and a political and cultural twilight time of conflicting openings and closures. The events of 9/11 added more complexities. Derrida's contradictory, contested legacy is entwined with this historical conjuncture's counterflows (i.e., its dispersed meanings, differences, fragmentation, contingency, presentism, textualism). How then to remember him? Nietzsche said that: "One is Fruitful only at the cost of being rich in contradictions..." and that this wealth provides "antennae for all types of people." Derrida's multiplicity mirrors postmodern times. Adieu Derrida!

Homegrown Democracy, Homegrown Democrats

Norman K. Denzin

Another political story, a narrative about political depression. We are 45 days out and counting from the 2004 election. Bush is leading Kerry in every poll. I despair. Nothing is working. Yesterday the New York Times devoted the entire Op Ed page to advice for the Kerry campaign. "Get a Message" seemed to be the message, and stay on it. Fifty percent of the American public think the country is headed in the wrong direction, and Bush is still leading Kerry by 13 points. The cracks in the history of this administration have been exposed. The Bush Presidency has trashed the environment, welfare, education, the economy, turned the rest of the world against us, and over 10,000 Iraqis and 1000 Americans have died in his dirty little Middle Eastern war. There are more than 100 anti-Bush books, and still counting. Bush's lies have been catalogued, documented and analyzed (Corn 2003; Dowd 2004; Ivins 2003; Moore 2003; Pope 2003; Powers 2003). There were no weapons of mass destruction. The Iraqis do not love us. Bush was warned in advance of 9/11. And yet none of this seems to matter. Bush's handlers have turned fantasy into reality. Sixty percent of the voters still think Saddam supported Al Qaeda.

Critics assert that George Bush is a liar, a "President who knowingly and deliberately twists facts for political gain" (Hersh 2004: 367; Corn 2003). Turning intelligence estimates and wishful thinking into statements of fact has become an art form in this administration. Even Karl Rove knew, if Bush didn't, that arguments about Saddam's WMD program were based on "estimates full of judgments, not absolute certainties" (Woodward 2004: 219). Indeed, Rove understands the difference between a fact and intelligence. Paraphrasing Woodward, "If it's a fact, it is not called intelligence" (Woodward 2004: 219).

But to call Bush a liar assumes that his lying indicates "an understanding of what is desired, what is possible, and how best to get there. A more plausible explanation is that words have no meaning for this President beyond the immediate moment, and so he believes that his mere utterance of the phrases makes them real. It is a terrifying possibility" (Hersh 2004: 367). Indeed!

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The discourse about Bush's lying presumes that there is reality against which assertions of truth and lying can be judged. This is a contested assertion. In the postmodern age of simulation the hypperreal is more real than the real. Baudrillard (1983) taught us this. In such a regime, a lie is true if it conforms to the hypperreal; that is, if it has the appearance of truth. Bush and his handlers skillfully manipulate this postmodern logic, ensuring that his assertions about the real have the appearance of being truthful. Indeed the entire Iraqi war was premised on this model.

The public was sold the belief that WMDs existed in an empirical reality. The inspectors would be able to locate the weapons, even though Saddam claimed they did not exist. Indeed Saddam's lies proved the weapons existed. In the end the weapons did not need to be found. Their absence meant they existed. We had no choice but to go to war.

The media model that scripted Bush's war short-circuited history by manipulating the logic of the hypperreal. It created instant meaning by producing a fictional sense of public opinion which supported the war. Saddam and Al Queda were connected. Saddam was evil. Al Queda is evil. The war was making America safer from terrorists. A total

mythological system was in place. A closed system where lies became truth, and truth became that which conformed to the hypperreal. And this is how we got into this mess.

Any attempt to checkmate this system by remaining within this structural communication grid is doomed to failure. Three thousand books proving that Bush is a liar will not alter the fact that we are in this war. The discourse about lies and truth is a dead-end.

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In the face of all of this I turn to Arundhati Roy for wisdom and understanding. She speaks for me (2004: 41). We are living in a time of "Instant-Mix Imperial Democracy (bring to a boil, add oil, then bomb)" (Roy 2004: 47). "We are, "the people of the world, confronted with an Empire armed with a mandate from heaven...an Empire that has conferred upon itself the right to go to war at will and the right to deliver people from corrupting ideologies...by the age-old, tried-and-tested practice of extermination" (Roy 2004: 47).

This Empire cannot stand still. It "is on the move, and Democracy is its sly new war cry. Democracy, home-delivered to your doorstep, by daisy-cutters. Death is a small price for people to pay for the privilege of sampling this new product: Instant-Mix Imperial Democracy" (Roy 2004: 47).

Like many, I too am tired of "racing to keep abreast of the speed at which our freedoms are being snatched from us" (Roy 2004: 41). Who among us "can afford the luxury of retreating from the streets for a while in order to return with an exquisite, fully formed political thesis" (Roy, 2004: 41), apparently neither John Kerry, nor the Democratic party.

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And so I felt a great excitement when I saw Garrison Keillor's new book, Homegrown Democrat (2004). I thought, here is a man who thinks deeply about democracy, and these troubling times we are living in. He'll pull me out of my depression. So I bought the book.

Keillor occupies a special place in my biography. Without fail, every Saturday at 5:00 p.m. I listen to A Prairie Home Companion. I love the folk music, and the jazz, Guy Noir, the stories from Lake Wobegon, the opening monologues, which have for the last four years frequently mocked George Bush. I love Keillor's 1960's sensibilities, his mid-life struggles with fatherhood, his wry humor, his efforts to find a comfortable place inside this neoconservative project called corporate globalization. I love his criticisms of the neo-cons, how they have molded the instruments of democracy, including an independent judiciary, a free press, and the right to vote to their own purposes (Keillor 2004: 3).

So I fixed a glass of iced tea, grabbed Homegrown Democracy and settled into a comfortable chair on my deck, basking in the late afternoon sun. Time for a little Lake Wobegon therapy. What is this thing Keillor calls homegrown democracy? It is surely not anything like Bush's "Instant-Mix Imperial Democracy," that home-delivered democracy that arrives with a war cry and a bomb. To my delight, I felt right at home. Keillor dedicates his book "to all of the good democratic-farmer laborites of Minnesota." These are my people, farmers from the heartland. Democrats.

Homegrown Democracy moves in three directions at the same time. It is a short version of Keillor's autobiography. It is his attack on Bush, the Iraqi war, the neo-cons and conservative Republicans. It is his celebration of the values that mean-spirited Republicans, corporate shills, hobby cops, misanthropic frat boys, and gun fetishists have attacked. These are the homegrown democratic values of the hard-working, God-fearing people of Lake Wobegon, and their idea of the common good. The Republicans have broken the civic compact, the simple code of the Golden Rule that underlies Midwestern civility. The politics of kindness. The obligation to defend the weak against the powerful. "I didn't become a Democrat because I was angry," he writes. "I'm a Democrat because I received a good education in the public schools of Anoka, Minnesota, and attended a great university and when I was 18, John F. Kennedy ran for president."

This is my story! I attended excellent public schools in Iowa City, Iowa. I attended a great university, the University of Iowa. And, much to the ire of my Republican grandfather, I voted for John F. Kennedy for president. Like Keillor I worked to put myself through college. I discovered classical music, lecture halls, libraries, concerts, plays, opera, modern art, jazz, Dave Brubeck, great books, Sociology, classic literature, professors who cared about teaching, all-

night cafes, coffee shops, existentialism, Marxism, Sartre, Camus, Hemingway, C. Wright Mills, folk music, the civil rights and anti-war movements.

I paid $93 for a semester's tuition and soon found my way to the long reading tables in the University Library. Around me, as there were for Keillor, were young men and women like myself, "bent to the hard work of scholarship, folks for whom attending college was not an assumed privilege" (Keillor 2004: 63). We dressed alike, ate the same food, listened to the same juke box music in the small cafes. We'd come early, before 7:00 p.m., to get a good table, my friends and I. And there we would sit, books stacked in front of us, sharpened pencils, heads bowed, "rows and rows of us, reading, reading, reading—sons of garage mechanics on their way to medical school, daughters of dairy farmers out to become professors of Romance languages" (Keillor 2004: 63-64).

In the Music Room in the Iowa Memorial Union I discovered Ravel's "Bolero" and learned how to smoke a pipe and look existential, and read philosophy. There I sat, in my favorite chair, lost in the music, looking to others to see how to do this. We had a purpose, a sense of vocation, we could have stepped out of Thomas Hart Benton's great mural, "The Children of the Great Plains Claiming Their Birthright" (Keillor 2004: 64). We were "taking our once-in-a lifetime chance to realize our God-given talent...no guarantees of success" (Keillor 2004: 64-65), hard work, a love of this life, reading, reading, reading, reading.

I moved back into this space as I turned the pages of Homegrown Democrat. I shared my warm feelings of nostalgia with Aisha Durham, who reminded me that this sounded a lot like a white man's story about college in the 1950s. She asked, "Were there any African-Americans in that music room?"

Stunned, I searched back in my memory. There were no African-Americans in Iowa City, well, one family. There was a black man on the basketball team for a while but they sent him back to New York City for gambling. Aisha was right.

I went back to Keillor to see what he said about race. Democrats, he states, "have changed American in simple basic ways in the past fifty years that have benefited everyone. Race has become less and less an issue in people's lives and racism has ceased to be socially acceptable anywhere. Women have moved into every realm of society... Equal opportunity in education, employment, housing...Homegrown Democrats led the way in bringing these things about" (Keillor 2004: 26). Indeed!

I can't let these lines stand without protest. In my community racism is on the rise. We have more, not less discrimination. Hate crimes are a daily occurrence. Women have hit glass ceilings, and the community drove our last Chancellor out of town. They said she was insensitive to local tradition. Maybe we don't have the right kind of Democrats in Urbana. I doubt it.

In the chapter "The Good Democrat" he lists ten characteristics of Democrats. Democrats distrust privilege and power (Keillor 2004: 169); regard equality as bedrock (Keillor 2004: 172); are inclusive and integrationist to the core (Keillor 2004: 174); are city people at heart...The city is the crowning achievement of society (Keillor 2004: 176); believe in individualism (Keillor 2004: 180); are union guys (Keillor 2004: 182); have sympathy for the helpless, especially children and the elderly (Keillor 2004: 185); are diehard teachers (Keillor 2004: 189); are realists (Keillor 2004: 192); have values that are rooted in courtesy and kindness (Keillor 2004: 195). The good Democrat is homegrown, from the great Midwestern heartland, the land of Lake Wobegons.

The last chapter invokes 9/11, reading it as a rare moment of shared community, pain and suffering in New York City. Anticipating the Republican National Convention, which celebrated Bush and 9/11, Keillor invokes the men and women who died that day, "They deserve better than to be the platform for intolerance" (Keillor 2004: 232). He catches himself. "I refuse to be furious. I am a happy Democrat living in a great country, at home in St. Paul, Minnesota, where no matter what, there is a lot of satisfaction going on a good deal of the time" (Keillor 2004: 233).

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I'm an angry Democrat. I'm angry at the Democrats who supported Bush's war. I'm angry at politicians who wait to see which the wind is blowing before they commit a political act requiring honesty and courage. I'm tired of Democrats who make lists. I'm angry at Democrats who think the good Democrat is homegrown. I'm not sure homegrown works any longer. My homegrown was narrow and provincial, and white. In my Lake Wobegon the Golden Rule and the politics of kindness and the obligation to defend the weak and the poor only extended to those folks like the rest of us.

I agree we have a moral obligation to bequeath this world to our grandchildren in better shape than we found

it. But it is not just our grandchildren to whom this world is bequeathed. This is a global project. I know it must be local, but I do not think it can be entirely built from the values that circulate in Keillor's imaginary utopia. And this saddens me because for a long time I time I have liked going to Lake Wobegon at the end of a hard week. I'm not so sure I can any longer do this. I must look elsewhere for my alternative model of democracy.

Urbana Illinois, 20 September 2004

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Beyond Beltway and Bible Belt: Re-Imagining the Democratic Party and the American Left

Ben Agger

Electoral politics now matter. George W. Bush, Jr. and his evangelical-Christian supporters have seen to that. Bush threatens to undo the welfare state, roll back civil liberties (and block new ones), and isolate the United States from the rest of the world. His foreign policy is an admixture of isolationism and unilateral adventurism. Homeland Security, his contribution to our political lexicon, has a Nazi-era resonance. Gays, lesbians, foreigners, liberals, the left have been demonized by a supposedly literal interpretation of the Bible, which drives the Christian right, Bush's base of support. This has the makings of fascism.

Meanwhile, the Democratic Party continues to fade toward the right, in defense of centrism and staying mainstream, a process begun during the 1970s, after Nixon's counterrevolution against the sixties was complete. Clinton, Gore and now Kerry sound like Republicans, defending capitalism, capital punishment and patriotism. Neo-liberalism has replaced the welfare-state liberalism of FDR and even JFK and LBJ. FDR's welfare state, while not perfect, significantly buffered the ravages of capitalism for those without jobs and without hope. Reagan and now the junior Bush began to dismantle the welfare state, arguing that tax cuts and concessions for the wealthy would grow the economy and create jobs, allowing all boats to rise. This of course returns to Adam Smith's free market and Herbert Spencer's survival of the fittest.

The morning after Bush Jr.'s re-election, I was listening to NPR and I hear a sound byte from Ralph Nader. He quoted Eugene Debs. He quoted Debs, returning to an earlier socialist tradition in American politics. The Democratic Party needs to reinvent itself, borrowing from Debs, the New Left of Port Huron and, yes, from Karl Marx—he of the early writings, where he discussed alienation and presented his vision of a democratic society of praxis, in which people become fully human only by treating each other, and nature, as subjects, not objects.

The Dems lost to Bush, Jr., seemingly a beatable candidate, because they didn't get enough of their potential base—the poor, minorities, the working-class and students—to vote. Kerry didn't motivate enough eligible voters to go to the polls, not because he waffled on Iraq or was 'off message' until late in the campaign but because the Democratic Party has become a pale copy of the Republican. This convergence has given the Democratic base no real options and, as a result, people stay home. If the national turnout had been 70% or 80% of eligible voters, Kerry would have enjoyed a landslide. A realigned Democratic Party that gets out the vote would never lose. Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, in their excellent Why Americans Don't Vote, make the case that those who don't vote are largely poor and Democratic.

One of the early goals of SDS was the realignment of the Democratic Party. The authors of Port Huron understood that traditional electoral politics was not to be abandoned but supplemented by SNCC-style activism. Jack Kennedy's New Frontier and then Bobby Kennedy's late arrival at an anti-war position inspired Tom Hayden more than did Eugene McCarthy's campaign against Humphrey. The New Left abandoned the Democratic Party because the faction we now called Beltway Democrats—then, Johnson and Humphrey—wouldn't budge on the disastrous war in Vietnam. This led to Chicago 1968 and the Nixonian counterrevolution, which, through Cointelpro

and then Watergate, effectively ended the optimism and activism of the 1960s.

There are several issues to be considered here:

The Religious Right

In a classic study published in 1950, Adorno et al analyzed the "authoritarian personality" that embraced fascism, hastening the final solution. They argued that powerless people can be mobilized from above to take out their rage on even weaker others, such as Jews. Divide and conquer is in play today as born-again Christianity redirects anger against economic and political elites toward women, minorities, gays and lesbians, Arabs, everyone considered "Other" by postmodernism. Evangelical Christianity is in part a response to the sixties and its aftermath in affirmative action. It is also in part a response to global cosmopolitanism that threatens to de-center America. Evangelical Christianity is found outside of cities, in the south, and among those without college education.

Capitalism, Christianity, Capital Punishment: Democratic Centrism

It has become conventional wisdom inside the Beltway that Democrats must loudly support a free-market economy, Christian values and the death penalty. They must also wave the flag. One of the most absurd images of the recent campaign was Kerry dressed up in hunting garb. They must make these concessions in order to pursue the Southern, rural, evangelical voter, especially after 9/11. The problem is that the hard right knows an imposter when it sees one. Kerry, after all, volunteered to fight in Vietnam and saw action and was still pilloried for lack of leadership qualities. He, Hilary Clinton and Ted Kennedy are conflated as northern liberals outside the mainstream of Babbitt-like Baptism. This rightward fade has robbed the Democratic Party of a discernible identity, especially FDR-era progressivism. The WPA is scarcely imaginable today.

The loss of Democratic identity causes important segments of its base to stay home, even after Florida 2000, when we learned that every vote counts, given Electoral College mathematics. The much-ballyhooed large voter turnout this November is large only by comparison to the even lower turnout of 2000, when scarcely 50% of eligible voters went to the polls. And the people most likely to stay home are those without economic and educational advantages, for whom voting is an unnecessary hassle given the meager benefits now that the two parties have drifted together.

The people who vote are largely suburban and now, with the born agains, rural. People in cities making less than $50,000 in household income—the core of the Democrats' base—are less likely to vote. Bush won this time because the Republicans realized that born-again voters did not turn out in healthy numbers in 2000, largely because it was not yet clear to them that Bush, Jr. was one of them. (He is really not, as Texans understand. This is all persona cooked up by Rove in order to prevent Bush, Jr. from losing the hard-right vote denied his father in his bid for a second term.) 9/11 was used to mobilize the fears of the powerless, much as Hitler used Germany's humiliation at Versailles and the dismal German economy to re-channel rage against international Jewry. Gays and lesbians may become the new Jews as Bush puts into practice his twin investment in "family and faith," code for heterosexual patriarchy and evangelism.

Restoring the Democratic Party's Progressive Identity: An Agenda for Social Democracy

To get its base to vote—especially urban people whose household incomes put them in the bottom two quintiles—the Democrats need to move back to the left, albeit in ways somewhat different from FDR. What it means to be "left" is at stake. We need to borrow images and practices from Canada, with its four-party system and its healthy social-democratic party, called the New Democratic Party. We could even rename the Democratic Party by inserting the Canadian adjective "new" in front of it. Social democracy is derived not from FDR but from the Webbs, from Bernstein's evolutionary socialism and especially from the New Left and the 1962 Port Huron Statement, which stressed participatory democracy and rejected Old-Left discourses of socialism and Marxism where these terms were

corrupted by their confusion with Soviet statist socialism.

An agenda for American social democracy should include commitments to:

- *Economic justice*

  Enhancing economic justice would involve the federal government in a serious (this time) war on poverty. The bottom fifth of American households average $9,000 in annual income; the poverty threshold for a family of four is over $18,000. Images of Americans as wealthy, gleaned from our media culture, are betrayed by income data from the U.S. Census. The average household, frequently with two earners, averages just over $40,000. The second-highest fifth of households average $75,000, with the highest fifth averaging barely over $100,000. Nearly a third of Americans live in poverty. Most of these, of course, are potential Democratic voters, but few vote.

- *Economic restructuring*

  Economic restructuring addresses what Marx called the flight of capital, its insensitivity to national boundaries, which leads to globalization. The problem with tariffs is that it keeps poor countries poor. Outsourcing, though, cannot be sold politically, nor is it a tolerable way to deal with labor. Instead, the Democratic Party must take the lead in reconceptualizing the United Nations not only as an international police force but as an agent of the redistribution of capital. The U.S., Japan and the EU countries—indeed, all industrialized countries—would shift a portion of capital each year to the United Nations, restructuring the world economy. This way, poor countries could be industrialized and prepared for democracy, which would inhibit nuclear proliferation, block terrorism and religious tyranny and lower the birth rate, which, as demographers now understand, only drops when countries industrialize. We can persuade voters of the reasonableness of this massive "foreign aid" by showing them that it will help them keep their jobs, mitigate international strife and address runaway world overpopulation. We can pay for this economic restructuring by implementing a multilateral demilitarization, of the kind addressed below.

- *Renewable energy*

  Burning fossil fuels pollutes, attacks the ozone layer, contributes to global warming, politicizes the middle East, enriches patriarchal Saudi Arabia and American oil companies. Kerry proposed tax rebates for people who buy hybrid cars. We must go far beyond that, committing ourselves to energy conversion within our lifetime.

- *National health care and child care plans*

  Canada and all of Europe have national health care plans. Canada's model is workable and affordable. Canada is moving toward a child care plan, thus addressing pressures on women, still largely responsible for children, created by the massive influx of women into the labor force since the 1960s. The United States lags far behind Canada and Europe on these two issues.

- *Global multilateralism*

  Manifest Destiny mixed with unilateralism has led to the irresolvable war in Iraq. Bush's macho adventurism has lost the U.S. every ally except Tony Blair. We need to deal with the likes of Saddam, Al-Qaeda and North Korea collaboratively, using the United Nations and the EU. The isolation of the United States in the world community exacerbates the so-called terrorist threat.

- *Demilitarization and an end to nuclear proliferation*

  We cannot end domestic poverty and restructure global economies without reducing the massive defense budget of the U.S. Global multilateralism enables us to share the burden of checking nuclear proliferation, which is a far more serious problem than so-called terrorism.

The Democratic Party's New Constituencies: The Next New Left

To win political power and prevent the regression into an atavistic hard-right evangelism, Democrats must develop new alliances among minorities, young people and a working class that one might best characterize as the anxious working class—anxious about job loss. This working class includes office and factory workers, women and men, workers who belong to unions and workers who don't. This is the post-Fordist working class of the so-called service sector. This is not very different from the combination of change agents identified in Port Huron as

relevant to post-Eisenhower America. Indeed, in the early history of the New Left we find fascinating models of voter registration and mobilization that can help get out the vote for "new" Democratic candidates. Borrowing from the example of SNCC, early SDS participants moved to inner cities in the north in order to organize poor people. This was called ERAP—economic research and action program. Where SNCC's drive was largely voter registration, ERAP tried to organize the poor at a neighborhood level. Hayden, for example, lived and worked in Newark for four years, largely before SDS turned its attention to the war in Vietnam. Today young people could work in cities and elsewhere in order to register and mobilize voters every two years. If conducted on a massive national scale, this new ERAP would enable the Democratic Party to regain power. It would have the additional advantage of coalition building, helping bring together a large-scale movement for social democracy and social justice that moves beyond electoral politics to transform a host of public institutions and personal arrangements. This radicalizes the traditional agenda of FDR-era Democrats, replacing liberalism with social democracy.

Changing the Discourse of Social Change: Democrats and Social Democracy

The new Democratic Party needs to change its discourse and seek new metaphors of change. No longer pandering to the flag, the market, religion and the family, Democrats must argue for secular social justice, unashamedly. The early SDS was certainly correct to abandon a European discourse of leftism as unsuited to the New World, even if they had read C. Wright Mills and early Marx. As I suggested earlier, "an agenda for social democracy" carries little overt baggage and can help both Democrats and democrats reposition themselves in the struggle for social change. This agenda must be coherent; it must also connect political and personal, as Mills and feminists have urged. To be New Left means that one requires social change to pass through everyday life, not bypassing it either via a vanguard party or the imagery of a long road. For new Democrats to get out the vote, they must demonstrate that avoiding the hard right and embracing a significant alternative will matter—to welfare mothers, school teachers, the anxious working class, college students.

Bush has done us a favor. He has galvanized the Democratic Party and the left to reinvent themselves. We will reflect, write and organize in dialectical counterpoint. Four years will pass quickly in the meantime.

Niebuhr's America

Charles Lemert

These words come to you wherever you are after having been posted by me from New England, then by the editor from Texas. I am old enough to think of their movement from me to you as travel along a wire. But we all know, even without understanding it, that this is a world so fast that "wire" is but a filament of the metaphoric imagination. Some are excited by the speed of a wireless world. For them, the collapse of the distances between and among meaning makers and their intendeds is fraught with promise. Perhaps so. Still, when once people sent each other hand notes, borne across small urban spaces by messengers on foot or horseback, there was a considered charm to their messages. Today, however, small children learn their letters on key boards with mice that roam unconnected outside their electronic nests, their stubby fingers pecking away over an ill-considered time that all but eliminates space by downloading fantasy worlds to abodes without addresses. This, indeed, is a wonder. But is it good?

When once, in the before of time, words were broadcast along wires, there was at least—in the word Derrida unwittingly made famous—a difference in and around the meanings conveyed. When meanings are encrypted on paper or papyrus time is required to traverse the space from sender to receiver. The difference written upon the distance of time is that the meanings are deferred. In the synapse they remain open, unsettled, and indeterminate—thereby erasing the absurd dogma that meanings are unmediated windows on the inner soul of the meaning maker. Oddly, the erasure of distance in this world of mice without nests does not reconstitute the illusion of immediacy. If only because we usually stroke the wrong key or lose the mouse under the clutter all about, time enters before and after the message is sent, leaving behind a void through which no honest line can cross. Everyone knows that even the hardest drives are infected, thus declining toward the final crash that will cremate the already buried digital traces.

When, as now, in the considered medium of Fast Capitalism, a batch of words meant to express an extended idea appears all at once somewhere in cyberspace, the meanings are transformed. With all the talk of time-space, much of it broadcast these days from Great Britain, too little attention is paid to the space beyond time—which may just be the only time that matters in respect to social things. What if Giddens, so gently brilliant though he is, is wrong in claiming that the current digitalized state of global affairs is but an acceptable transformation of the long familiar one? He suggests, among much else, that Globalization-II is really about the disembedding of "social relations from local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across indefinite spans of time-space," as he puts it in The Consequences of Modernity. I am more than ready to forgive Giddens for the appalling name he gave this process, because distanciation is at least an appealing idea. Still, one is right to wonder if it is the right idea for the times.

Against the confidence that time-space, thus transformed, will provide a nest, if not a bed, one might do better questioning whether we, like the mice at hand, will find our ways back to our intendeds. In fast worlds skepticism is a bother. But it may be more realistic. All along the half-millennium history of modern things, humanoids have been reasonably well nested (if unevenly embedded). Yet, the record is inconclusive as to whether any important number of our kind of animal ever truly sought out social relations that could be said, even remotely, to have been meaningful. The problem of time-space in relation to social things may not, after all, be one of overcoming, or even explaining, the time-space collapse. Rather it seems just as likely that the problem is more moral than technical—a moral failure of nerve to bridge the social distances. In any and all historic times, whatever their degree of distanciation, neither men nor women, and assuredly not their kids, have shown a very strong inclination to reach out across the differences wherein human meanings, such as they are, may be hiding.

In quite another vocabulary—one we who are embedded in the worlds of social theory seldom consult—this

chronic moral incompetence that keeps social relations distant and disturbed is called sin. Well, I should say, it may be called sin when what one is calling out is the willful refusal to close the social distances from others; to overcome, that is, the differences wherein the others in question are those we (if there is a We) loathe, distrust, or fear.

In our all too sophisticated worlds, we who make our livings peddling the truths of social things have grown suspicious, not just of religiously embedded ideas like sin, but even of the ideal that when bad things happen to good people the good is insufficient to voluntary action that would bridge the differentiating distance between it and the bad. Part of the problem, we must admit, is that though a good many social theorists think of themselves as radicals of one or another stripe, in truth we are loyal children of liberal culture (and not even necessarily in the better American, as opposed to European, sense of the word). Truth be told, as Walter Russell Mead once put it, the liberal is one who believes in the good and may be willing even to allow it to trickle down to the lower classes on the sole condition that the cost not threaten their market position. Put this way—and it is not a bad way to put it when one surveys the historical record—the liberal mind is the mind of sin insofar as it declines moral responsibility for the social differences that fascists and conservatives so brazenly think of as eradicable human inferiority. We liberals—even when we masquerade in the guise of a purported radical Left—are far the more willfully dishonest when it comes to the social time-space between us and those so irretrievably nested in the far away time of distant social place. Some of us would far rather scoff at Mother Teresa than suck the breast of our own sour milk.

Today as I write is October 9, 2004. Last night in Paris Jacques Derrida died of cancer. He suffered, he said, as much from the treatment as the disease. But over the years, he suffered ever more as to the state of world. Those who think the ironic is a joke never understood irony to begin with and certainly did not understand Derrida. The irony he understood most was not the double entendre of differences, but the sober withdrawal of time toward death. The world he just left is deadly. In times like these, what is needed is a bracing assessment of the human condition with respect to abuses of power. The crisis at hand when global power is in the hands of an arrogant nation is the crisis of the moral value of political power. The important question is that of power's duty when the principal global state is powerful in the extreme when compared to all others. This is not, however, Lord Acton's dilemma of the corruption that flows from absolute power. It is not so much that absolute power corrupts but that it corrupts by consequence of its refusal to see that power is itself a projection of might, not so much across real geographic spaces (though it is that) as over and deep down through the social spaces it aims to control.

When one state attains global power as the American did after 1991, the power it attains appears to be mighty in the contrast to the lesser powers. But it is not, and never can be, absolute. To the contrary, the irony of American power in these times is the remarkable extent to which comes quickly to its own feeble grip on the reins it coveted so long. State powers of these kind rely on arrogance which in absence of pervasive respect for their hegemonies becomes a necessary, not stylistic, modus operandi. Not even Habermas's rephrasing of Weber's idea of legitimation crisis comes quite close enough to the global circumstances all about early in the 2000s. It is not simply that the more global the sphere of political control the more the powerful must distort as a condition of maintaining global power. When it comes to global structures wherein there is but one power, absolute or not, that power has no need to confront its own limitations. In such a circumstance, arrogance is the necessary virtue of power gone wild. In the Abrahamic religions of the West and near-West—Islam, Judaism, the various Christianities—the refusal to come clean as to its normal human limitations is sin, the only word that will do.

In respect to the necessary sin of all politics, no other social thinker of the previous century had so realistic a theory as Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971). A theologian by trade and vocation, Niebuhr was certainly among the most influential political thinkers of the middle decades of the twentieth century. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., in "Reinhold Niebuhr's Role in American Political Life and Thought," argued in 1956 that Niebuhr was the one thinker of those decades who put thought to the evidence that the naïve liberalisms of the Social Gospel and pragmatisms of the first decades of the twentieth century were beyond repair. Europe, having suffered the disillusionments of the War of 1914, knew this very well, but not the Americans.

Niebuhr's thinking on the subject of power was shaped by the defining experience of his youth as a pastor from 1915 to 1928 in Detroit. Though called to serve a traditional, declining urban congregation, Niebuhr, still in his twenties, quickly engaged himself on the side of industrial workers in a city where automobile manufacturing ruled by the hand of Henry Ford who presented himself as the patron saint of economic justice in the offer of then higher wages. Thus began Fordism, born not of fairness, but of greed for efficient production. The higher wages famously broke Marx's rule on the suppression of labor costs as the key to the extraction of surplus value. But the break was only apparent. The wages were taken back in the purchase of the automobiles labor produced—thereby

doubly exploiting the laborer.

Reinhold Niebuhr's genius lay in a remarkable capacity to do very many things at once, none more exceptional than applying prodigious night-time study of the ancient and modern texts to the evidence of his day-time work with the poor. His dirty work in the political struggle with industrial capitalism settled Niebuhr on a strong political theory of power. His most famous book may well be one written in 1937, after he had moved to New York City to teach at the Union Theological Seminary. Moral Man and Immoral Society, written in the aftermath of the Depression of 1929, was Niebuhr's most cutting brief against liberal idealism. He attacks mercilessly the then still prevalent bourgeois idea that man, the alleged agent of liberal history who acts on the basis of love, can be the moral force of social change. Social relations, Niebuhr said (still under the sway of Marx), are fundamentally determined by economic structures, first, then too by the State. What hope there may be for a realistic strategy for the promotion of social and economic justice resides, at best, with the State. Niebuhr's experience in Detroit did little of course to encourage in him the thought that economic progress might issue from corporate capitalism. Yet, the State, even then early in FDR's tenure (not to mention now), is nothing if it is not consumed with its own political interests. While State interests may lead political power into corrupt alliances with business, they may also lead in the direct of social peace. This, of course, was a view formed by the tragic turmoil of the 1930s when economic misery threatened the body politic far beyond capitalism's will to provide.

From the liberal point of view, hardly in the ascendancy in the 1930s, hope in the State's feeble interest in justice was no hope at all. But, from the point of view of Niebuhr's political realism, hope was not the issue so much as justice hard-won. Of this moral dilemma Niebuhr wrote in 1937 in the conclusion to Moral Man, Immoral Society: "Society must strive for justice even if it is forced to use means, such as self-assertion, resistance, coercion and perhaps resentment, which cannot gain the moral sanction of the most sensitive moral spirit." In the terms of his primal vocabulary, political power is as caught up in sin as is the corrupt individual. The moral individual stands no chance of overturning power by means of pious love. Power is sin, not because it is absolute, but because it refuses to recognize, even to contemplate, its own limits.

In the language of secular social theories, to say that power is sin is to confess, mutatis mutandis, the first article of political realism—that all politics are engaged with sin, in their foolhardy flight from the reality of human limitations. Social theories of the left have been no less guilty than the pretentious ideologies of the right in their refusal to face the well-structured limits on power's ability to resist social evil. Call this arrogance sin, call it greed, call it what you will, in the end it boils down to the reality that the time of justice is the time beyond time. Everything is judged sub specie aeternitatis. Eternity is the final distanciation. It is also the ultimate irony in that this time beyond time itself is the only time in which the social differences that distance classes of people from each other can be erased.

Only when the powerful begin to see that power, far from being absolute, is no different from the grass that withers on the autumn fields, will there be some realistic prospect of social and economic justice. The body politic, like all particular bodies, dies sooner or later. Political power dies the sooner because it lives off its own necessary arrogance, the most combustible of all known fuels.

> One of the most pathetic aspects of human history is that every civilization expresses itself most pretentiously, compounds its partial and universal values most convincingly, and claims immortality for its finite existence at the very moment when the decay which leads to death has already begun.

> — *Reinhold Niebuhr, Beyond Tragedy (1937)*

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